



## news

## significant shorts

## Bones found in farm funeral pyre

What are believed to be pieces of human bone have been found in the remains of a "funeral pyre" at a remote east Devon farm where businessman Derek Levon shot himself in front of armed police, it emerged yesterday.

Detectives trying to trace 61-year-old Mr Levon's cancer-stricken wife Pauline are now trying to establish whether there is any link between the remains found in the fire, and those discovered in a tin box in the boot of a car after last Friday's suicide.

The latest discovery was made as detectives searched an area of scorched earth on grazing land at his West Yeo Moor Farm, near Witheridge.

## Rise in unfair dismissal claims

The number of unfair dismissal cases heard at industrial tribunals rose by almost a half between 1991-92 and 1995-96.

In the year to March 1996, 9,936 unfair dismissal cases were heard at industrial tribunals in England and Wales, up almost 46 per cent from 6,809 in 1991-92. The number of successful verdicts increased by almost a quarter to 3,803 from 3,043. Labour's chief employment spokesman Ian McCartney said: "When he became Prime Minister, John Major said he wanted to create a country at ease with itself. These figures show that the Tories have created a country in fear of its future."

## Mystery baby's mother found

The mother of a baby found by a newspaper delivery boy on Boxing Day has been traced. The child was abandoned in a hedge in Gateshead with her umbilical cord still intact. A spokesman for Northumbria police said: "We have established the identity of the mother of the baby. However, she has yet to be interviewed in order to establish the exact circumstances which led to the baby being abandoned."

## Killer fireworks still on sale

New Year revellers could be putting their lives at risk by using dangerous imported fireworks, Labour's consumer affairs spokesman Nigel Griffiths warned. Despite the Government's ban on the aerial shells - the fireworks responsible for three deaths over the 5 November celebrations - Mr Griffiths said stocks were still available.

## Leading actor joins anti-EU campaign

The UK Independence Party has attracted its biggest celebrity supporter so far in *Rumpole of the Bailey* actor, Leo McKern.

McKern, who will feature in the party's pre-election broadcast, is a former Tory voter who, according to the UKIP, "can no longer support John Major's insistence of putting party before country".

The party is portraying itself as the only true vote for anyone wanting Britain to withdraw from the EU. Unlike Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party, the UKIP proposes withdrawal without a referendum.

## Holidaymakers on way home

Three hundred British holidaymakers stranded in the Dominican Republic because of a ventilation fault on their charter aircraft, were due to arrive home in the early hours of this morning. The

Thomson package tourists had spent the previous night at hotels in the capital, Santo Domingo. Their aircraft was expected to arrive from Gatwick at 4am - 21 hours behind schedule. Simon Calder

## Rape victims relive ordeal

The victims of a horrific Boxing Day double rape are to take part in interviews with a police artist over the next few days to help draw up an E-fit likeness of their attacker.

The rapist attacked a 53-year-old woman and her nine-year-old daughter in the early hours of Boxing Day in a west London flat where they were visiting relatives. Police

appeals for information have prompted a few calls from the public, but no significant breakthroughs have yet been made, said a Scotland Yard spokesman.

## A strong suit in informality

Most men would prefer to wear casual clothes at work rather than a formal suit and tie, a new survey has found.

One in three men still have a formal grey or blue suit at work, with just 13 per cent allowed a discreet splash of colour. Formal suits were least popular in the North and South-west and most liked in the South-east, the poll of 800 workers for shelling company Phillipsave found. The most conservative men dressers were in the South-east and the Midlands, where 40 per cent were required to wear a suit, white shirt and tie.



Winter watch: Warden Dave Hunter keeps a look-out for salmon poachers near Winchester, Hampshire. The fish are vulnerable at this time of year as they make their way upstream to spawn

Photograph: Emma Boam

## 'Goodwill message' from Germany sparks storm

Tony Barber  
Europe Editor

The first British-German dispute of 1997 broke out yesterday even before the new year had rung out the old. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel came under fire from politicians of all major parties after he indicated that Germany would prefer Europeans to win the general election.

"A general election will be held in Britain no later than May. The country must create clarity about its European policy," Mr Kinkel said. "Britain is part of Europe. Europe needs Britain."

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's centre-right coalition has never concealed its desire that Britain play a more positive role in the European Union. However, Mr Kinkel's statement, which appeared as part of a new year's message summarising key issues for German foreign policy in 1997, was unusually blunt for a minister to make publicly about another country, especially a close ally.

Pro-Europeans said they feared that the statement might play into the hands of Euro-sceptics who are keen to portray continental Europeans as bullies and busybodies issuing instructions to Britain. Even

Paddy Ashdown, the unambiguously pro-European Liberal Democrat leader, criticised Mr Kinkel, saying his remarks were "unhelpful and almost certainly untrue".

The German foreign ministry denied the statement represented interference in British politics and said that it had been intended as an expression of goodwill. "In a

European Union which aspires to become a political union, interference in [another country's] internal affairs is by definition hardly possible. But even if it were possible, it is certainly not intended," a spokesman said.

"Britain must become clear on what depth of integration it wants to reach and, as Mr Kinkel said, we want Britain to be among those countries which, together with others, achieve a deep integration as possible."

Conservative Party chairman Brian Mawhinney seized on Mr Kinkel's remarks as evidence that Britain's EU partners wanted a Labour victory rather than the re-election of a Tory government, which he said would "defend British interests". And he accused Labour leader Tony Blair of having "already said that ultimately he will do what the other European leaders tell him".

Labour ridiculed the assertion but said Mr Kinkel should not have made his comments. Alastair Darling, Labour's Treasury spokesman, said: "It is up to the British people to choose their next government. Klaus Kinkel's comments are a kind of desperate message from Europe that there is a British case to be put, and that British case is not being put just now because the Conservatives have weak leadership."

Kinkel is seen as something of a lightweight in domestic German politics. It is unlikely that he would have become Foreign minister were it not that he belonged to Mr Genscher's Free Democrats (FDP), the junior centrist coalition partner of Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU). Yet he did not even join the FDP until 1991, and during his two-year spell as the party's leader from June 1993 the FDP came close to electoral oblivion. For all his brusqueness, Mr

Kinkel is, as they say, no stranger to controversy. A trained lawyer and civil servant, he became Germany's Foreign minister in May 1992 and quickly earned a reputation for impatience and saying the unsayable in public.

Exasperated by the inability of Germans and other Western governments to end the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Mr Kinkel, 60, once said: "One can be filled with cold rage because of one's helplessness." His outspokenness forms a contrast to the quiet but effective diplomacy of his predecessor, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who served 18 years as foreign minister. Only last week Mr Kinkel issued a public warning to President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia not to crack down on opposition street protests, saying: "He should keep his hands off the rights of the demonstrators."

However, Mr Kinkel's new year's message, with its implicit appeal to Britons to vote for pro-Europeans in next year's general election, was not especially controversial in Germany. Most politicians there would heartily concur that Germany wants Britain to overcome its internal divisions on Europe so it can join in building the European Union. For all his brusqueness, Mr

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## Minister who says the unsayable

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## Store is accused on E. coli scare

Steve Boggan  
Chief Reporter

And if they aren't, then why is this supermarket chain causing unnecessary confusion all over Scotland?

John Brown, spokesman for Scotmid, said the company was merely being cautious on behalf of its customers. "There is a lot of confusion over *E. coli* and we are just playing on the safe side.

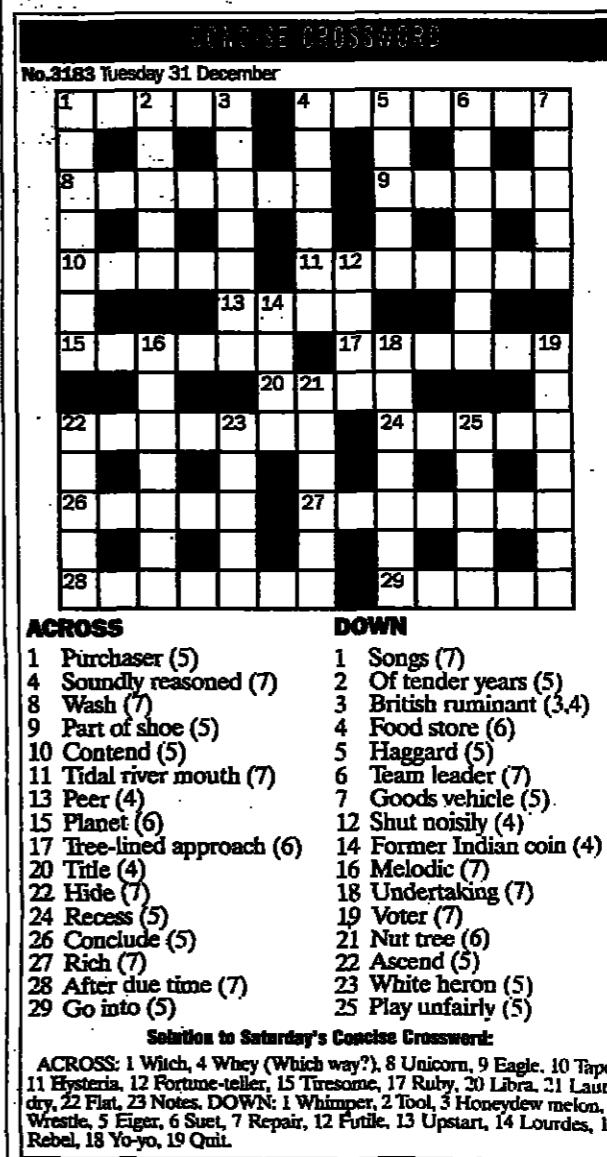
From the beginning, we have told our customers we would be prepared to accept the return of any goods they were worried about."

"Last week, a board meeting decided to extend that offer across all our stores and to include frozen products. After all, who knows what might be lurking at the back of the freezer?"

He denied the operation may have been a public relations exercise that had backfired.

Today, Professor Hugh Pennington, who leads the inquiry into the outbreak, is due to present his preliminary findings to the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth.

Last night, the Scottish Office said there had been no new confirmed cases of *E. coli* poisoning since 20 December. So far, 409 people have shown symptoms of the illness, while 258 have been recorded as confirmed cases.



Source: Saturday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Witch, 4 Why (Which way?), 8 Unicorn, 9 Eagle, 10 Tape, 11 Bysters, 12 Fortune-teller, 15 Tresors, 17 Ruby, 20 Libra, 21 Laundry, 22 Flat, 23 Notes. DOWN: 1 Whimper, 2 Tool, 3 Honeydew melon, 4 Rebel, 5 Eiger, 6 Suet, 7 Repair, 12 Fruile, 13 Upstart, 14 Lourdes, 16 Quill.

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news

# Forget tonight, what will you be doing on New Year's Eve 1999?

Glenda Cooper

As you gear up for tonight's festivities, your thoughts may well turn to seeing in the new millennium. But unless you have already booked your celebrations - or have the odd million pounds to spare - you are probably too late.

It was as far back as 1989 that Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, told an Arts Council lunch: "If it is at all possible, purchase an option on any date that you can find for the night of 31 December, 1999."

Seven years on, many big venues have been snapped up. Forget Tower Bridge - it was booked this year.

Madame Tussaud's has already gone, and the Royal Albert Hall was reserved as far back as 1975. The QE2 has already been grabbed by the Millennium Society of Washington for a 20-day cruise at an estimated £300,000 a day and even Disneyworld, in Florida, has sold out its 17,000 hotel rooms.

And for those spectacular places left, the competition may rule out all but the most wealthy.

A spokesman for British Airways said that it had been inundated with inquiries for Concorde seats but had yet to start taking bookings. Your chances of acquiring a flight however are slim. There is already "a list as long as the M4" according to BA and the cost for an aeroplane carrying 100 people "will start in five figures".

"We will be chartering seven aircraft," said the BA spokesman. "We are thinking of having a triple celebration, one in the UK, one mid-air and one in New York, but we will be making a decision later as to the best way."

Edinburgh, which this new year will host to more than half a million visitors, is also looking to be one of the premium millennial cities, with the Virgin Group sponsoring the 1999 Hogmanay Festival.

This year alone demand for hotel rooms in the city was so great that some of the visitors have had to be placed in ac-



Out with a bang: Fireworks explode over Edinburgh Castle during a New Year's celebration. The city has yet to decide on what it will do in 1999

commodation up to 50 miles away.

Hotels and bed-and-breakfasts have already received bookings for 1999 but organisers are playing their cards close to their chest as to what

will happen on that New Year's Eve.

"We have not announced what will happen yet," said Abigail Carney, spokeswoman for Unique Events. "But Edinburgh wants to be one of

the millennium cities and will definitely be a great place to be at that party."

The Savoy Hotel in London could have been booked twice or three times over but at present is not taking reservations.

Sadly for football fans, Wembley Stadium has ruled out any-

until it has decided what exactly will take place that night. The New York Marriott hotel got its first reservation in 1983 - two years before it was built.

For football fans, Wembley Stadium has ruled out any-

one being able to book it for the big event. "We have had lots of inquiries," a spokesman said.

"Now we have the national stadium it would be possible to have one of the world's biggest parties but it is not available."

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## news

# First there were the three tenors – then came the bricklayer's son

Marianne Macdonald  
Arts Correspondent

Most singers would give their eye teeth to be hotly promoted by a record company, but a television documentary this week offers a chilling insight into the reality of life for opera's latest discovery, Roberto Alagna.

EMI wants this dashing son of a bricklayer to be the "fourth tenor" in succession to Luciano Pavarotti, José Carreras and Plácido Domingo. But viewers of the Channel 4 film this Sunday will be left wondering how anyone can stand up to the schedule such stars demand.

For EMI, 33-year-old Alagna is a publicist's dream. Born in Paris and discovered in a pizzeria, he had no contact with professional opera until his mid-twenties. After the death of his first wife he got engaged to the beautiful Romanian opera singer, Angela Gheorghiu.

Aimée Gauthier of Angel EMI records reveals his great attraction: "Not only is he a great tenor, he's a hunk. When we first became aware of Alagna's relationship with Angela our first reaction was 'this is a great love story and we should use this'. It's a story the entertainment press is going to want."

In Channel 4's film, Alagna does no less than four recordings for EMI in a year, squeezed into a schedule which never appears to let up. He races from one country to the next trying to fit interviews, launches, rehearsals and recordings around prepa-



Is there room for a fourth? The great tenors make a formidable trio. From left, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras and Luciano Pavarotti

for his much-hyped débüt at the Metropolitan Opera House.

At one point he bumps into the great tenor whom EMI is grooming him to replace. Pavarotti asks after Alagna's career. "Piano, piano," says Alagna modestly. "Piano forte!" jokes Pavarotti.

But the strain is showing. Alagna walks out during a recording of *Romeo et Juliette*

with Gheorghiu in Toulouse. Days later he is forced to drive overnight to Paris to rehearse; Jonathan Miller's *La Bohème*. When he arrives he realises he is also booked to sing at a government party. He cancels the rehearsal and arrives at the party, only to find he is too late to perform.

Miller is displeased. "The more highly paid and famous these people become, the faster

and looser they play with the schedule," he tells the cameras.

Still the pressure increases with Alagna working 26-hour days in a bid to "please everyone". Later he is forced to cancel performances at Covent Garden, New York and Geneva, citing exhaustion.

Meanwhile, the crucial first night at the Met in April does not go well: Alagna has a cold. The audience are unimpressive. "He's supposed to be the fourth tenor, and that wasn't the voice of the fourth tenor," says one, interviewed during the intermission.

Alagna walks off stage, and the atmosphere is that of a wake, and the film shows Gheorghiu racing after his dejected figure. Back at EMI, however, the executives plot on. They do not see his botched United States débüt as a problem, and they have a new idea to market his rage to riches: *Rocky*.

"It's a great *Rocky* story. I think we should play up on that," says one woman. "Good planning," agrees another.

■ A poll of 1,300 listeners to Classic FM radio revealed yesterday that EMI's promotion of Alagna was not a success – he received four votes to his wife's six and did not make the top 10 ranking, headed by the Swedish tenor Jussi Björling, who died in 1960. Domingo came third after the soprano Maria Callas, who died in 1977, while neither Pavarotti nor Carreras made the top ten. Classic FM presenter Hugh Macpherson said it was "extremely telling that our opera buffs have voted resoundingly for performers of the past".



Star in the making: Roberto Alagna is being heavily promoted by EMI, but the road to fame is not entirely smooth

Photograph: Clive Barda

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£15,000-£24,999	3.40%	2.64%	2.00%
£25,000-£49,999	3.70%	2.96%	2.40%
£50,000+	4.10%	3.28%	
	4.40%	3.52%	
CapitalBuilder		Special Retirement Bond	
£1,000-£4,999	4.00%	£1,000-£6,999	4.90%
£5,000-£9,999	4.30%	£5,000-£14,999	5.15%
£10,000-£24,999	4.50%	£25,000-£49,999	5.50%
£25,000-£49,999	4.80%	£50,000-£99,999	6.15%
£50,000+	5.10%	£100,000+	6.50%
Monthly Income		InvestDirect	
£1,000-£4,999	3.60%	£2,000-£10,000	5.40%
£5,000-£9,999	4.00%	£10,000-£24,999	5.40%
£10,000-£24,999	4.20%	£25,000-£99,999	5.50%
£25,000-£49,999	4.50%	£100,000+	6.20%
£50,000+	4.80%		
TESSA		Bonus 60*	
£25-£9,000	6.50%	£2,000-£10,000	5.40%
TESSA 2		£10,000-£24,999	5.40%
£25-£9,000	6.50%	£25,000-£99,999	5.50%
		£100,000+	6.20%
Bonus Saver*		The Smart Account	
£20+	6.50%	£1+	4.50%
Smart 2 Save		Smart 2 Save	
£1+	4.50%	£1+	3.60%

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£5,000-£9,999	3.40%		1.76%
£10,000-£24,999	3.80%		
£25,000-£49,999	4.20%		
£50,000+	4.50%		
TESSA Bond & Linked Bond		PortfolioInvestor	
£3,000-£19,000	6.50%	£1+	5.70%
TESSA Monthly Income Bond			4.56%
£3,000-£19,000	6.10%		5.90%
TESSA Flexible Savings		IncomeBond	
CapitalBonus 180	6.50%	£2,000-£19,999	4.10%
£5,000-£9,999	4.30%	£10,000-£24,999	3.28%
£10,000-£24,999	4.50%	£25,000+	5.10%
£25,000+	5.15%		
	4.20%		
CapitalBonus 90		TaxFree Option	
£500-£4,999	4.00%	£5,000-£14,999	4.00%
£5,000-£9,999	4.30%	£5,000-£14,999	3.20%
£10,000-£24,999	4.50%	£10,000-£24,999	3.44%
£25,000+	5.15%	£25,000+	3.60%
	4.28%		
CapitalBonus 90 Monthly Half-Yearly		180 Day	
£4,000-£4,999	3.60%	£5,000-£14,999	4.20%
£5,000-£9,999	4.30%	£5,000-£14,999	3.20%
£10,000-£24,999	4.50%	£10,000-£24,999	3.44%
£25,000+	5.15%	£25,000+	3.60%
	4.30%		
CapitalBonus 90 Monthly Half-Yearly		Double Bonus	
£4,000-£4,999	3.60%	£5,000-£14,999	4.00%
£5,000-£9,999	4.00%	£5,000-£14,999	3.20%
£10,000-£24,999	4.10%	£10,000-£24,999	4.12%
£25,000+	4.50%	£25,000+	3.60%
	4.30%		
Subscription Share		Subscription Share	
£1-£200 per month (or £400 p.a.)	6.50%	£1-£200 per month (or £400 p.a.)	5.20%

\* If the average balance in the BusinessInvestor falls below £1,000 interest will be paid at 0.50% gross p.a. (0.40% net p.a.). Interest is calculated daily and paid quarterly on the first day of March, June, September and December. \* Premiums and PortfolioInvestor are not available for pension funds.

\*\* If the average balance in the BusinessInvestor falls below £1,000 interest will be paid at 0.50% gross p.a. (0.40% net p.a.). Interest is calculated daily and paid quarterly on the last day of March, June, September and December for four years.

\*\*\* For investment in the BusinessInvestor and PortfolioInvestor, interest is paid half-yearly on Treasurers Account on the last day of June and December. PortfolioInvestor is only available for pension funds.

\*\*\*\* If the average balance in the BusinessInvestor falls below £1,000 interest will be paid at 0.50% gross p.a. (0.40% net p.a.). Interest is calculated daily and paid quarterly on the last day of March, June, September and December for four years.

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\*\*\*\*\* If the average balance in the BusinessInvestor falls below £1,000 interest will be paid at 0.50

# Education officials told to learn English

Lucy Ward  
Education Correspondent

Government education officials are being given lessons in the use of plain English after a study found that the texts of Britain's flagship job-training qualifications were riddled with obscure jargon and mangled grammar.

So far 130 people involved in writing material for National Vocational Qualifications have been sent back to school for "workshops on language issues". They have been taught how to explain NVQs in a way that is more likely to attract potential trainees than to send them scurrying for their dictionaries, or put them off entirely.

In NVQ-speak, information is not given but "imparted", and when a mistake is made

the result is not a correction but a "rectifying action". Trainees are expected to "action" tasks and to "originate evidence" — if they can find their way through the literature.

NVQs, launched 10 years ago, offer work-based training in areas ranging from hairdressing to engineering, based on industry-set standards. The Government wanted all employers to offer them by 2000, but so far only 7 per cent do so. By that date, 60 per cent of the workforce were to be trained to NVQ level 3 or equivalent, but only 40 per cent have reached that standard.

A report on NVQs published earlier this year amid fears over standards said that candidates were deterred by "complex, jargon-ridden language", while a computer analysis of the phrases and vocabulary used found they bore little relation to everyday English.

## The jargon that leaves students dazed

Two examples of 'performance objectives'

From NVQ level 3 in engineering assembly  
"Materials presented to the assembly operator are completely compliant with the operational specification."

From NVQ level 2 in care  
"The forms which discriminate are safe and the behaviours which make expressions of these and that discrimination are not restricted to particular groups in society."

Details of the language lessons emerged in a written parliamentary answer from Education and Employment minister James Paine. Mr Paine said that those attending the classes had included 27 officials from the Department for Education and Employment, 56 people from bodies which accredit vocational qualifications, and 47 representatives of industry bodies, including 12 consultants. He confirmed in an answer to the Labour education spokesman Bryan Davies that the cost of the workshops was £116,000.

Researchers analysing the texts of the qualifications on behalf of the department fed all 2 million words from the database of current NVQs into a computer and compared them with a database of 200 million words from newspapers, magazines, books and broadcasting.

The study revealed that details of the standards trainees were expected to reach were often phrased in an opaque or ambiguous way, while the grammar employed dispensed with the tried and tested conventions of subject, verb and object.

Mr Davies yesterday condemned the need to spend taxpayers' money on training officials "how to write properly". He said: "It is quite extraordinary that those responsible for educating people in basic communication skills need

to take lessons themselves in how to communicate."

Professor Alan Smithers of Brunel University, a leading critic of NVQs, claimed that confusion had arisen after consultants were used to "translate" standards set by employers into qualifications terminology.

He said: "It gets in the way of what the employers and candidates want and is a digression from the essential purpose of these qualifications."

Obscure language is one of the key criticisms levelled at NVQs, which have also come under fire for being expensive, too undemanding and unpopular. The qualifications, a central part of the Government's drive to improve Britain's skills base and competitiveness, are to be relaunched this spring in an attempt to increase take-up.

## Forests to grow from old greeting cards

Nicholas Schoon  
Environment Correspondent

After a record number of Christmas cards were sent this year, nature conservationists are hoping that they will be recycled into new forests around the country.

Two of Britain's biggest high street names, the Post Office and Boots, are providing collection points on their premises for people to get rid of their cards throughout January and February. The money raised through the recycling effort will fund tree-planting projects.

For the first time the number of items sent through the mail in the four weeks running up to Christmas exceeded 2 billion, and this was dominated by Christmas cards. The figure works out at more than 30 items for every adult and child in the country.

Up till now almost all of these cards have ended up being dumped on landfill sites with the rest of the weekly household refuse. But from Thursday this week 6,200 post offices, one-third of the total in Britain, and all 1,225 Boots stores will take the old cards.

The two organisations have combined with recycling companies to turn them into cardboard packaging material. Experience from previous, smaller-scale Christmas card recycling schemes make them believe that they can collect several thousand tons.

Money raised by the scheme will go to the 12 English Community Forests, the Woodland Trust in Scotland and the British Conservation Trust For Volunteers in Wales and Northern Ireland — all for tree-planting schemes.

The Community Forests are areas on the outskirts of large towns and cities where the Government's Countryside Commission, the Forestry Commission and local councils are collaborating to create new urban fringe woodlands for people and wildlife.

The cards will only fetch a few pounds for each ton recycled, so this grand rescue effort can only raise tens of thousands of pounds, however successful it is. But the organisers argue that there is a better alternative than throwing them all away.



Fleet's hope: James Spark, 16, one of the Whitby apprentices, hopes five years' training will make him 'the youngest skipper in the country'. Photograph: Steve Forrest/Guzelian

## Career that's all at sea

Esther Leach

They shivered in the biting wind that whipped around the harbour and began to doubt whether they had done the right thing. But eight young men had already signed up to become Britain's first port-based apprentice sea fishermen.

They will be trained on trawlers of the Whitby fleet in North Yorkshire whose skippers have volunteered to teach them to ensure their industry survives. Arnold Locker, who runs Locker's Trawlers and owns seven trawlers, said: "Put bluntly, we were going down a sticky road. Our business alone has invested £1m in boats this year but the industry's got such a negative image we couldn't get the new recruits."

"Captains of fishing vessels have a very different job from 10 years ago. Now it's all computers and satellite navigation systems. We need really qualified people running these boats."

At the end of last year several Whitby fishermen approached a training organisation, the Yorkshire and Humber Ports CITA, and secured the support of the North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council.

## Rude awakening for air traffic control

Air-traffic controllers with sleep disorders are escaping medical checks and dozing off at work, an expert has claimed.

People with the lives of passengers in their hands are hiding the fact that they have sleep problems because they fear for their jobs, warned Professor Neil Douglas, director of the Scottish National Sleep Laboratory in Edinburgh.

He told the annual meeting of the British Sleep Society in London: "The traditional approach has been to bin patients as people who are either lazy or who don't have a problem. I have had air-traffic controllers, bus drivers and lorry drivers as patients. All of them have admitted that they have fallen asleep doing their job."

But, he said, such people can be successfully treated and carry on working.

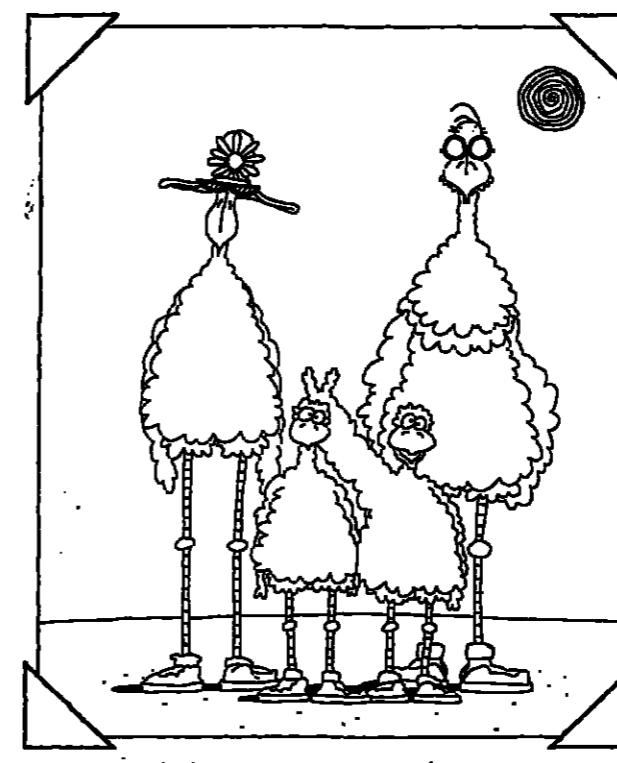
Air-traffic controllers undergoing the same rigorous medical checks as pilots to spot any problems that might pose a hazard to the public. Their hours are also carefully structured to ensure maximum alertness — no more than two hours on duty without a break, no more than two successive night shifts, no shifts longer than 10 hours, or gaps between spells of less than 12 hours.

Spokesmen for both the Guild of Air Traffic Controllers and the Civil Aviation Authority said they had never heard of controllers suffering sleep disorders. The spokesman for the CAA said: "We would certainly take it seriously if anyone did have a problem. We have our own medical department which would certainly be able to offer help to someone with a sleep disorder." He said he failed

to see how a controller could fall asleep and not be noticed, because they never worked alone.

The most serious sleep disorder is narcolepsy where the patient is liable to fall asleep unexpectedly at any time. Insomnia caused by stress and depression is a common problem, and sleep apnoea prevents patients breathing normally at night so that they continually wake up and are exhausted the next day.

Professor Douglas said that daytime sleepiness was a huge problem, affecting about one in 25 middle-aged men and one in 50 middle-aged women. "There is evidence that one-quarter to one-fifth of all motorway accidents are caused by the driver falling asleep at the wheel ... these accidents have been shown in one study to be the commonest cause of fatalities," he said.



The Earlybird books early and saves enough to buy a delightful camera.

## Nurses appoint Saudi lawyer

Ian Burrell

The two nurses facing murder charges in Saudi Arabia have been visited in jail by the British consul and have appointed a Saudi legal expert to represent them at their trial.

Tim Lamb, the consul, spent 15 minutes with each of the women in Damman central prison, after flying 250 miles from Riyadh, the Saudi capital. Lucille McLaughlin, 31, of Dundee, and Deborah Parry, 41, of the Midlands, both said they were in good health and being treated well by prison officials.

The women are accused of the murder on 11 December of Yvonne Gifford, 55, an Australian nurse who worked with them at Dhahran hospital on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia. Mr Lamb spoke to them individually and was able to take personal messages which have been passed on to their families.

Britain's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Andrew Green, said both women were "naturally anxious" but bearing up quite well "in the circumstances". They selected a lawyer to rep-



Lucille McLaughlin: charged with murdering colleague

cause the procedures here are completely different, that they are necessarily unjust. I think that would be a mistake to assume that," he said. He added that 30,000 British citizens lived and worked "perfectly happily" in Saudi Arabia, many of them for years. Only "a handful" ever got into trouble, and at present there were just five British citizens being held in jail, including the two nurses.

Officials at the British embassy in Riyadh said the lawyer chosen was highly respected. "He is a local lawyer who is familiar with sharia law and who speaks both English and Arabic. He also has a good working relationship with the authorities," one said.

The two nurses had no contact with the British authorities since they were spoken to briefly on Christmas Eve by diplomats while they were being held at a police station.

With no date set for their trial, the case has already attracted great media attention and the Foreign Office yesterday expressed "concern" over reports in a Saudi newspaper published in London that the Britons had

confessed to the killing. The paper, *Al-Hayat*, alleged that a finger print from one of the suspects was found in Ms Gifford's room and that the Australian nurse was battered with a teapot before being stabbed with a kitchen knife. It claimed that almost £2,500 was removed from Ms Gifford's bank account in the three days after her death.

The details have not been carried in Saudi-based Arabic newspapers, and it is not clear whether British authorities will raise concern over prejudice to the trial. A Foreign Office spokesman said: "Whether it is the Saudi press or the UK press, we are always concerned about subjective items or items discussing the case."

He added that assurances of the integrity of the justice system given by the Saudi ambassador in London, Dr Ghazi Al-Ghazali, last weekend were "helpful". "He was obviously seeking to establish that they will have a fair trial," and certainly suggestions of summary executions are irresponsible. No Westerner in recent times has been executed in Saudi Arabia."

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## international

# The world was given a break from bloodshed in 1996. It cannot last

Few conflicts have spilled across borders in the past 12 months. Yet the seeds of cataclysm have been sown, says Christopher Bellamy

With North Korea's remarkable apology to South Korea over the incursion of one of its submarines into that country's waters, tension in one of the world's most dangerous flashpoints has been reduced, for the moment. Those countries constitute one of two such flashpoints on the Pacific rim, China and Taiwan being the other.

The past year has seen no major conflict between states, and, as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute noted in its latest yearbook, all 30 major conflicts under way, from Afghanistan and Algeria to Tajikistan and Turkey, were primarily internal.

The distinction between inter-state and intra-state war is never simple, however; the conflict between Hutu and Tutsi which devastated Rwanda and threatened to devastate Burundi spilled over into Zaire, for example.

Internal conflicts generate floods of refugees, who spill over international borders, which is why the UN's Chapter

— whether internal or international. So do the non-governmental organisations bringing aid to conflict areas. So do the general staffs of the major military powers, who may have to intervene. So do the media.

The underlying causes of future conflict tend to pre-occupy strategic thinkers more than immediate predictions of where it will be. Sam Huntington, a Harvard professor, recently formulated a theory that there would be a "clash of civilisations". Whereas the great wars of the industrial era had all been within western civilisation, now civilisations would collide like tectonic plates — Islam and Christendom, for example. So far, there has been

little evidence of such a collision: the causes of conflicts appear more local and trivial. Experts also agree that other big and inter-related factors — population growth, global warming and increased competition for vital resources, notably water and oil — will influence future conflict.

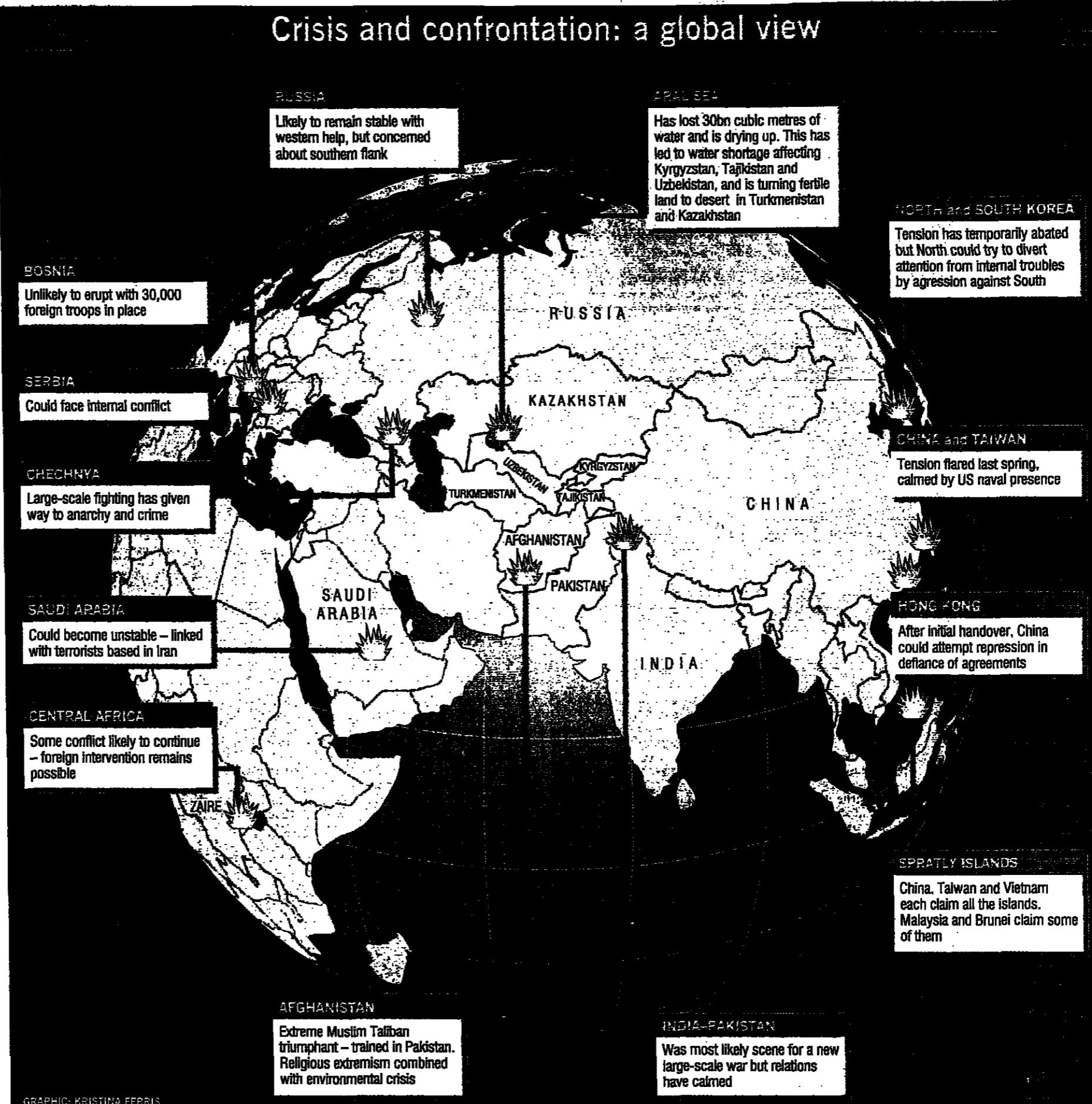
This is not necessarily an academic *manie de grande*. More people will compete for fewer resources in a changed, possibly more hostile environment. Flooded or parched out of their homes, they will need somewhere to go.

Robert Kaplan, writing in 1994, took West Africa as his point of departure for a different analysis of what the world will look like. "Sierra Leone," he wrote, "is a microcosm of what is occurring throughout West Africa and much of the underdeveloped world: the withering away of central government, the rise of tribal and regional domains, the unchecked spread of disease, and the growing perverseness of war." He describes the young thugs he has encountered as a seething mass of "loose molecules" just waiting to ignite into violence, and a blurring of the distinction between war, which by definition has some political objective, and crime.

The instability and conflict in central Africa — Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi — is likely to continue through the coming year. Uganda, the conduit for arms to Tutsi forces in Rwanda and Zaire, and Tanzania, where thousands of Hutu refugees are still sheltering, could also be drawn in to any conflict.

The past year may prove to be an aberration. And "internal" conflicts can be just as bad, and almost as destabilising as those between states. The conflict in Chechnya, which killed an estimated 30,000 people, is a case in point.

And as Kofi Annan, a former head of United Nations peace-keeping, takes charge as UN Secretary-General, he will want to identify where the next big conflict is likely to be



GRAPHIC: KRISTINA FERRIS

attention by attacking the south; this year's hand-over of Hong Kong to China might go badly, leading to friction which could explode in violence by 2000; Taiwan may use China's

returning home and Hutu militia headed west, further into Zaire. While holding back from committing ground troops, the Western powers stepped up reconnaissance of the area. British plans for intervention in Zaire had already started life as plans for intervention in central Africa in 1997, especially if Zaire disintegrates.

Central Africa nearly became the British army's next war in October 1996, when a full brigade of 3,000 troops was put on stand-by. It may still be its next big operation.

Most experts regard east Asia as the driest tinder to be ignited, however. North Korea, facing increasing economic troubles, might try to divert

preoccupation with Hong Kong to provoke it again, as it did this year, leading to China conducting naval manoeuvres.

With 31,000 stabilisation force troops in place, Bosnia

is unlikely to erupt in conflict again. Instead, Serbia itself may be the focus of renewed conflict in south-east Europe.

In the Taiwan dispute, the US fleet was a powerful instrument in deterring China from further action.

There are strong grounds for believing that, like the colonial powers in the 18th and 19th centuries and the Allies in the two world wars, the international community is safer when its military efforts take place at sea.

Naval power could also be crucial in another flashpoint area — the Gulf. While Iraq remains under close scrutiny, and appears to be more compliant after the conclusion of the "oil for food" deal, Saudi Arabia itself is looking increasingly unstable. That is

worrying for the West, still critically dependent on Gulf oil and on Saudi money for billions of pounds' worth of defence exports.

But the Gulf states and Iran enjoy easy access from the sea. That is why the last of the possible areas for major conflict could bring the realisation of the worst possible nightmare. All the factors — religious extremism, environmental degradation, disputes over oil and water, the break-up of old empires — converge in the Caucasus and central Asia and on the border of the old Soviet Union. The position of Grozny at the junction of the key oil pipelines out of central Asia was one reason why the Russians were so determined to keep it.

The other way out is through Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. In this much fought-over area of the world the Aral Sea is drying up, fertile land is turning to desert, oil and water are resources to be fought over, and religious extremism — exemplified by the success of the Taliban in Afghanistan — is increasingly important.

In recent discussions between Nato and the Russians, the Russians surprised Western observers by asking for help to deal with security threats to the south. The chairman of Nato's Military Committee, Klaus Naumann, said he had discussed co-operating with Russia to preserve security in the area. And when Michael Portillo, Britain's Secretary of State for Defence, visited Moscow in November, one of the Russian admirals in his audience asked for Western financial help.

An explosion in the world's heartland, far from the sea, would be very difficult for the international community to handle. And because it is relatively difficult to get to, it may not attract massive media attention in time to persuade governments to try to stop it.

## NOTICE TO HALIFAX BORROWERS.

The variable base rate for Halifax Building Society mortgage accounts (but not secured personal loan accounts) will be increased by 0.25% p.a. to 7.25% p.a.

The new interest rate will take effect on:

- 1st January 1997 for borrowers subject to immediate notice of increase in the interest rate.
- 1st February 1997 for borrowers subject to one month's notice of increase in the interest rate.
- the dates we specify for other borrowers.

Under the terms of Budget Plan the monthly payment will be amended from April 1997 or from the next review date for mortgage accounts on Annual Review.

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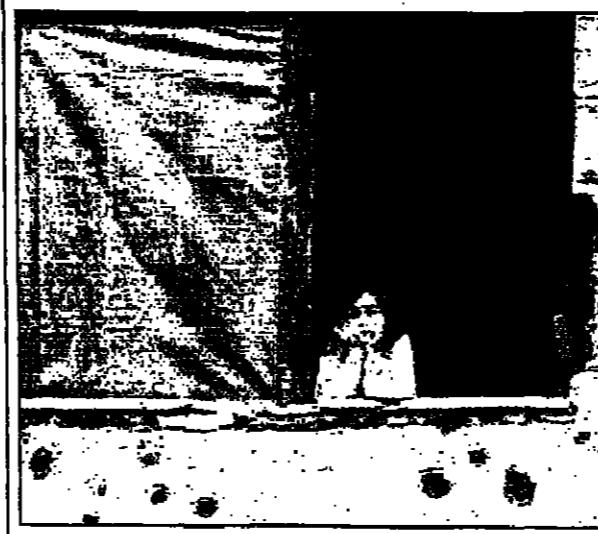
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The guns are silent in Bosnia ...



Where will the hatred burn next?

Photograph: Damir Jagolj / Reuter

THE PHILISTINES WHO THREATEN AYCKBOURN'S THEATRE Page 15

C&G Mortgage Rate Change

NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All C&G variable interest rates will increase by 0.05% per annum from 1 January 1997 except loans made after 22 December 1996 where interest is already being charged at the increased rate.

For loans in our annual instalment review scheme, the change will be reflected in payments from March 1997.

Details have been sent to customers who require written notice under the terms of their mortgage.

If you have a C&G Fixed Rate or Capped Rate Mortgage, your mortgage is not affected by this rate change.

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## features

# Still on track – or about to shunt into the sidings?

Irvine Welsh's 'Trainspotting' became a literary and box-office phenomenon this year. Boyd Tonkin asks what next for the unpredictable poet of the E generation

ANNUS MIRABILIS

**F**orget the Holy Grail. An even scarcer prize has eluded most of the British press in the three years since *Trainspotting* flung its author from Edinburgh's artistic underground into the upper atmosphere of cult celebrity. This is the Article by Irvine Welsh. The story goes that he had snared one this summer: a match report from the Euro '96 soccer tournament. Then he learnt that Welsh's conditions included the full payment of bar bills – for him and all his guests. Apocryphal or not, the idea of Scotland's lord of literary misrule playing a canny cat-and-mouse game with the mainstream media that have so clumsily lionised him does ring very true.

This year, Danny Boyle's hyperactive version of *Trainspotting* became the sole British movie to stand up at the box office against Hollywood's dumb-and-dumber blockbusters. The Welsh multimedia enterprise – the book, the play, the film, the poster, the CD – has now produced the cash to match its dash. At the same time, the writer himself shows signs of getting stuck in his own groove.

Some adverse reactions to *Ecstasy*, a triptych of new novellas, hinted that the long delirium induced by his drug-and-dance riffs may have begun to wane, at least in print. Yet, as he cranks out a book a year and ventures out from his canalside warehouse flat in Amsterdam to Europe's finest raves, Welsh refuses to agonise over his next step. Not least among his breaches of convention is this blithe indifference to the normal pathway of a literary career.

From House to trance, the music that pulsates behind his prose is marked by what the anti-rave clause of the Criminal Justice Act calls "a repetitive series of beats". You might say the same about his work. *Ecstasy*, with its blazing paeans to the rising generation's stimulant excesses, spent all his favorite mixes one more time: Mache-violace and self-hairied wincing with a "dancing, giddy, giddy" of shared elation and bliss and personal deliverance. In a review, the Scottish writer and musician Pat Kane professed himself "still saddened (or at least perplexed) by the proximity of individual sadism and collective joy in Welsh's work". Yet the man himself bothers no more about textbook notions of writerly development than the music he loves does about harmonic progression. The sheer exhilaration of the rush – in Welsh's case, his comic but affecting blend of profane "Embra" street talk and subtle literary English – makes up for a murky sense of direction. How long can the high last, for the author and his legion of fans?

His year's work shows that Welsh still keeps to roughly the same tracks laid down in *Trainspotting*. The drugs may change, the milieu stays much the same. As well as *Ecstasy*, he contributed to *Children of Albion Rovers*, the bestselling anthology of new-wave Scottish authors compiled by his first editor, Kevin Williamson. Early next year, he will publish a story in *Disco Biscuits*, a collection that marks the decade since House beats first arrived on these shores from the clubs of Ibiza. "The State of the Party" scrambles bad trips, rough sex and ultra-violence among the Edinburgh "schemes" into a familiar cocktail. As usual, the wreckage loser at its heart blames his paranoia on "the residue of the acid... just the comedown". Welsh's fiction always hints that an explanation for its characters' misery lies just beyond their chemically modified horizons. The big picture – a radical analysis that takes in masculinity and gender politics, Scottish nationalism, class conflict and eco-



Welsh: cares no more about writerly development than the music he loves does about harmonic progression

nomic change – always hovers just behind their blurry vision. In this new story, one of the bad lads brags about his sexual prowess and crowns that "Nae amount ay drus kin knock this boy oot ay his stride. That's whit sorts out the highly-skilled time-served men fae the also-rans". That poignant allusion to "highly-skilled time-served men" gives the speech a true Welsh touch – an echo of the secure industrial jobs that these kids' fathers held down, but that they never will. Yet the burgeoning Welsh cult fostered by the film seems to have stopped this broader view from ever coming into proper focus.

It's possible that Welsh will tire of his own myth and bow out of fiction for a while. With his surprisingly "straight" background in housing management and business studies, and his commit-

ment to the cosmopolitan rave scene, he might even be keeping some great entrepreneurial coup up his sleeve. Irvine Welsh as a supercool equivalent of London clubland baron Peter Stringfellow, for example? Stranger things have happened.

Yet we shouldn't underestimate just what he has achieved in three brief years. After decades of death-of-the-beer punditry, the wildest postwar youth movement – bigger than the hippies, bigger than punk – found its voice in a writer of startling verbal gifts. A real writer: not a DJ, not a designer, not a singer and definitely not a TV personality. A couple of years ago, it was immensely heartening to see *Trainspotting* stacked up by the till like Mars bars in every sweet shop across lowland Scotland, and selling just as fast. If

today's dance culture really was spiralling down into an abyss of sub-literacy, it would hardly seize on such an artful dodger as its mascot. In *Marabout Stork Nightmares* – a novel of even more controlled ferocity than *Trainspotting* – the harmed and harmful hero admits that he's spent his life "running away from sensitivity, from feelings, from love. Running away because a fucking scheme, a nobody, shouldnae have these feelings because there's fuckin' naeher for them tae go". For an army of readers with no time or taste for the sacred monuments of modern writing, Welsh has given their joy and fear somewhere positive tae go. The question that 1997 holds is whether Welsh the writer – as opposed to the brand-name and businessman – has anywhere fresh tae go himself.

**T**here is an area in France that in the last few years has meant a lot to me, because I never realised such an area could still exist. I thought it would have disappeared centuries ago. It is an area called the Aubrac, a plateau about 3,000ft high, up in the Auvergne, and about the nearest thing to ancient Gaul that I can imagine.

I happened across it in this way: for

six years I was music director of the

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How many doctors wash their thermometers between patients? What is 'bleep roulette'? Why do doctors drink? What is six times more likely to happen in Glasgow? Yes, it's your end-of-year quiz, and no prizes for guessing the answers

Phil Hammond  
MA, MB, BChir, MRCGP, DGM\*

Q: Who holds the UK record for impersonating a doctor?  
A: Mohammed Saeed of Bradford, who impersonated a GP for 30 years before he was caught – and he was one of the good ones.

Q: What did he allegedly prescribe for a sore throat and conjunctivitis?  
A: Croscote and shatpoo.

Q: What happens to the death rate when junior doctors go on strike?  
A: It goes down.

Q: What did Cornish nurse Valerie Tomlinson do that she shouldn't have?  
A: Wrap out an appendix.

Q: What did managers at Hartlepool and Peterlee NHS trust do to entice an American anaesthetist to work for them?  
A: They paid £1,700 to transport Fritz, his Rottweiler, over with him. Both returned, homesick, after a few months.

Q: Who definitely wasn't Dr Dolittle?  
A: Anthony Percy, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon from Sidcup, awarded £625,000 in damages from the *Daily Mirror* which called him Dr Dolittle for not coming into hospital to help his junior staff find an intensive-care bed.

Q: Which cough remedies upset nurses in 1996?  
A: Night Nurse and Day Nurse – they appeared in *Chemist and Druggist* under the heading "coughs" and hard during the day, "coughs" in bed." The Advertising Standards Authority said it was a harmless play on words.

Q: What percentage of doctors wash their thermometers in between patients?  
A: 15 per cent. And that goes for oral and rectal (I use the same one).

Q: In 1995, who sawed up a patient in a Bradford casualty department by mistake?  
A: A 17-year-old student.

Q: What percentage of hospital managers would not let them see their staff if they left?

Q: What are the Government's new safe-drinking limits?  
A: 28 units a week for men, 21 for women. Doctors prefer 21 and 14.

Q: How many people know what the Government's safe limits are?  
A: Fewer than 5 per cent.

Q: How many doctors, according to the BMA, are addicted to alcohol or drugs?  
A: 13,000.

Q: Why do doctors drink?  
A: To give them something to do while they're smoking. Boom, boom.

Q: How much a year do people who don't turn up to their outpatient appointments cost the NHS?  
A: £266 million.

Q: If you're under 60 years old, do you save the NHS money by exercising?  
A: No – you cost more because of injuries.

Q: What is the average wait for an emergency bed in London?  
A: Seven hours.

Q: What percentage of Dutch ear, nose and throat surgeons admit to having had sexual contact with a patient?  
A: 10 per cent.

Q: Which is safer: a) taking your gall bladder out by hacking a great hole in the abdomen; or b) whipping it out through a tiny keyhole incision?  
A: A nurse.

Q: Who said "The doctors and the medical profession are the priesthood and they regard themselves as a priesthood"?  
A: Nigel Lawson.

Q: Who made a disastrous party political broadcast about a girl with glue who's mother was a Tory candidate?  
A: The Labour Party.

Q: Who claimed that the idea for GP funding came while "holidaying" in Galicia?  
A: Kenneth Clarke – and doesn't it show?

Q: Who said "William – you need a large whisky"?  
A: Thatcher. Walkgrave, when he became health minister.

Q: How many of the Government's 27 'Health of the Nation' targets were met in 1996?  
A: 11.

Q: What were the biggest flops?  
A: Obesity, smoking and alcohol.

Q: Which area in England has most GPs per head?  
A: Harrow.

Q: Which has least?  
A: Rotherham, Sunderland and Barnsley.

Q: How many GPs would have to move to the North to even up the distribution?  
A: 700.

Q: How many of the symptoms a GP sees would get better if left to nature?  
A: 80 per cent.

Q: What percentage of NHS staff experienced violence at work last year?  
A: 40 per cent.

Q: Who said "Let me make one thing absolutely clear. The National Health Service is safe with us"?  
A: Thatcher.

Q: Who said "Maybe the Labour Party was telling the truth after all. Perhaps the NHS is unsafe in the Tories' hands"?  
A: The Daily Express.

Q: Where is Dr Phil spending New Year's Eve?  
a) The casualty department of City Hospital, Birmingham  
b) At home with the wife and kids  
c) Trafalgar Square

A: See Chamele 4 for details.

\* This column was previously labelled 'Phil Hammond MD'. A solicitous reader points out that Dr Hammond is not, in fact, entitled to attach these letters to his name, since these are his real qualifications.

## There was a carpet of jonquils as far as you could see

The time: May 1986

The place: the Aubrac, France

The man: John Eliot Gardiner, conductor

revelations



**T**here is an area in France that in the last few years has meant a lot to me, because I never realised such an area could still exist. I thought it would have disappeared centuries ago. It is an area called the Aubrac, a plateau about 3,000ft high, up in the Auvergne, and about the nearest thing to ancient Gaul that I can imagine.

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six years I was music director of the

Opéra in Lyon, and in May 1986 I was having dinner with a composer friend called Jean-Guy Baily and his wife. They rent a gite in the Aubrac and were enthusiastic about the region: the landscape, the people, the food. I got so caught up in their enthusiasm, I decided and then to set it for myself.

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Even before the BSE crisis blew up I was drawn to the idea of importing a select pedigree herd of Aubrac cattle into Britain. They are such magnificent specimens: thrifty, hardy, robust, easy to calve and they produce a superbly flavoured meat under the most natural

conditions imaginable. Apparently I am not the first person to import Aubrac to the UK, but I think I have gone, after two selections of breeding stock, become the main importer. It has been fascinating to see how they are beginning to adapt to the lower and wetter conditions of north Dorset, and how they have begun to put on bone as a result of grazing our chalk-down grassland. This was confirmed to me by one of the Aubrac breeders who, at his own expense, came to see for himself how the cattle were acclimatising. Our plan is to keep the females for breeding, to expand the herd and fatten the males. The first batch of these should be fully fit at 18 to 24 months – say, in time for Christmas '98.

I value the link with the Aubrac on so many different levels: aesthetic, historic, practical and human. As a region the Aubrac is bound to change with time, but I like to think that its unique qualities will remain intact for a good while yet, and that a small part of it will also survive and thrive, newly transplanted in southern England.

John Eliot Gardiner conducts Massenet's 'Chérubin' at the Royal Opera House, starting on New Year's Day.

Interview by Emma Daly

# Duds of '96

If you are feeling a little fat and full of Christmas indulgences, take comfort in the knowledge that even supermodels look grim at times. Fashion designers make mistakes; there is a very fine line between what is ahead of its time and what is simply way off the mark. Here, we show just some of the catwalk looks we *didn't* wear in '96.

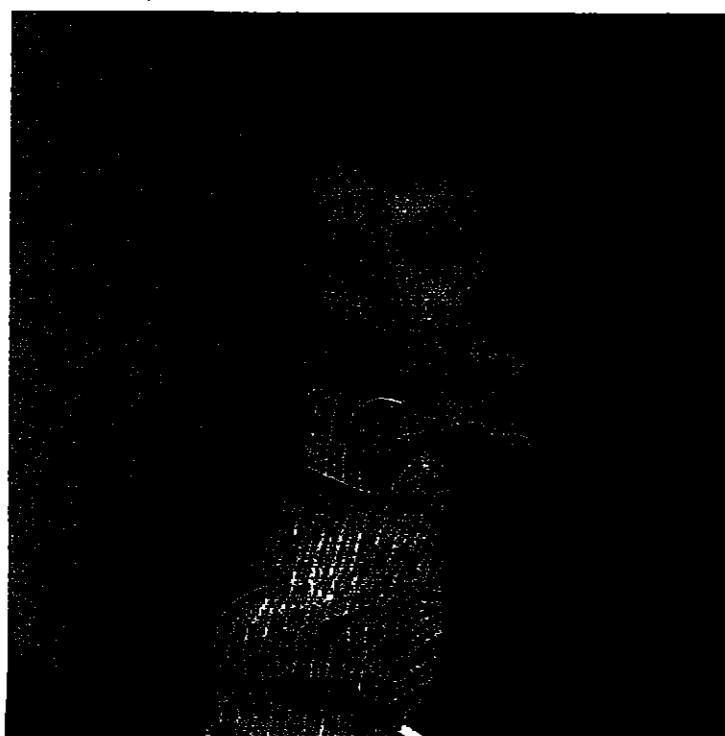
Photographs by Ben Elwes,  
Peter Macdiarmid  
and Sheridan Morley



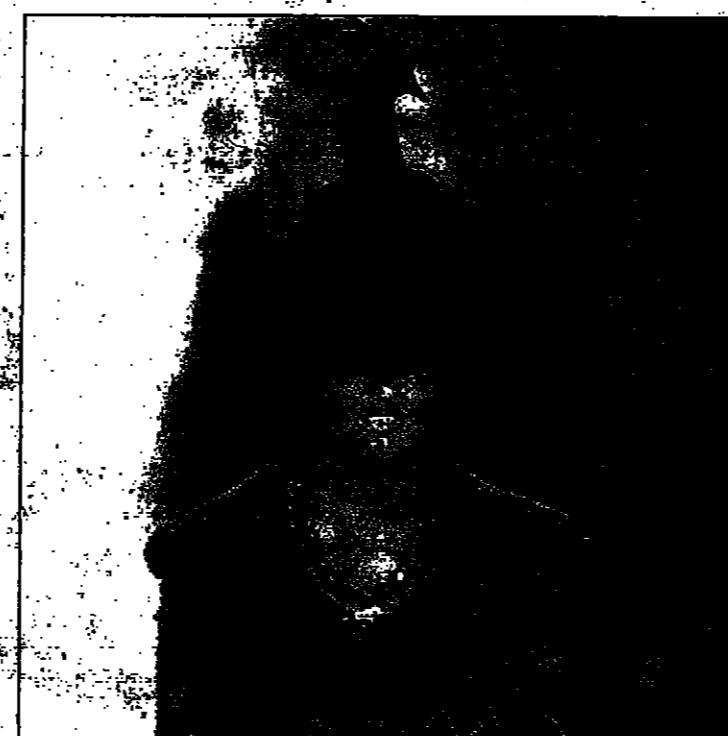
Anna Sui: Did you or any of your friends or loved ones fancy themselves as a Mike Flowers super hero, wax your pecs, smooth off your love handles and pull on a tight-cling body suit last summer? Perhaps. But in baby blue?



Comme des Garçons: Linda Evangelista posed as the Neckless Wonder and wore a candy floss wig in the hope that nobody would recognise her. Hunchbacks were not the ergonomic zone of '96, but at least Linda was paid for the privilege of being made to look a clown



Vivienne Westwood: This shirt was actually designed to look as though you got dressed in a hurry and buttoned it up incorrectly. The yellow dickie bow and consumptive make-up are optional.



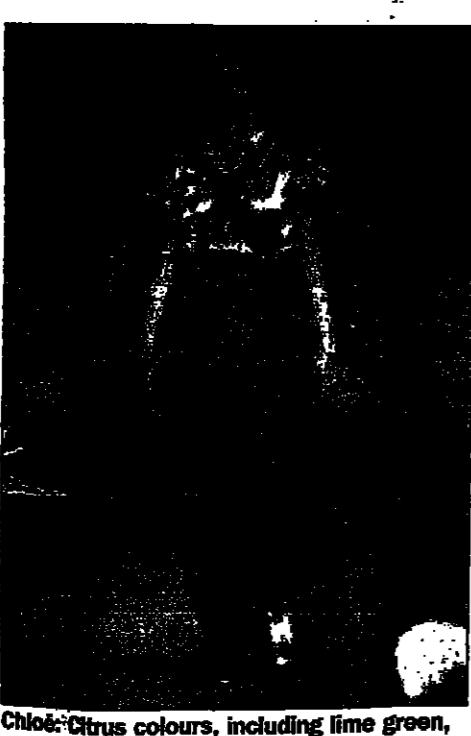
Anna Sui: A bad year all round for Linda Evangelista; the poor thing got out of bed to wear a stuffed peacock on her head



Chanel: How many women did you see on Blackpool Beach in one of these itty-bitty bikinis? Why bother wearing it at all?



Issey Miyake: Designers went futuristic with shiny space suits and things to do with tin foil when you're bored



Chloe: Citrus colours, including lime green, orange and acid yellow, were all the rage last summer. But Stepford Wife blouses and salopettes were never a good look



Karl Lagerfeld: Bubble skirts were a mistake in the 80s. Despite this effort by Karl, and thanks to popular demand, they did not make a comeback in '96



Issey Miyake: How to make a skirt out of a bin bag in three easy steps



Todd Oldham: Thrift-store Barbie doll on acid. Certain designers continued to confuse drag-queen glamour with fashion design



Christian Dior: Haute Couture for the severely flat-chested only, unless you wanted to look like Chesty Morgan without the pain of silicone implants

## The truth about...

hangover cures

**B**e not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," warns the Bible. (Ephesians). Not red wine, anyway; it contains a high proportion of congeners, a component of the grape skin, which triggers headaches in some people and is implicated in that most seasonal of ailments – the hangover.

Scientists are still uncertain about the precise cause of a hangover, but the villain of the piece is thought to be acetaldehyde, the substance into which alcohol is converted in the body. Too much of this toxin produces symptoms of nausea, headache, dizziness and the shakes. Excess alcohol also interferes with the process by which the body recycles water from the kidneys, causing dehydration. Complicat-

ing matters are the congeners, which are particularly high in cheap red wine and dark drinks, such as port and sherry.

Sadly, there is no speedy cure for any of these uncomfortable processes and little evidence that anything helps other than water, rehydrate and a couple of paracetamol, which is less likely than aspirin to irritate an already unsettled stomach. Alice Seltzer and Beeswax Resin are also available, as are various home remedies, such as a bowl of cold water, a slice of bread and a glass of beer, although all of these are an upper stomach. Despite claims about the reviving effects of vitamins (especially the B1, vitamin thiamine and the anti-nauseant vitamin C), the results are mixed, as they work alongside the stomach's own enzymes and other substances are listed online as hangover cures.

occurs in those with long standing alcohol problems, and which are unlikely to develop from an occasional binge. Hair of the dog – a glass of beer, say – may briefly anaesthetise and rehydrate the body but the effects are short-lived. Beer contains fructose, or fruit sugar, which is thought to speed up the rate at which the body metabolises alcohol, but science is still not convinced by its claims and say sugar, raised by the makers do not stand up to scrutiny.

There are ways to avoid the worst hangover symptoms. Drinking half a pint of milk to delay the body's absorption of alcohol will help. Force yourself to down a pint of water before going to bed is thought to be one of the most effective anti-hangover measures. And,

Cherrill Hicks

# Why shouldn't we listen to the Germans?

**H**elmut says: Vote Labour." If the Conservatives wanted to get really dirty in the run-up to the election campaign, they would already have pasted up a new billboard offensive overnight. "Vote Blair – if you want German tanks on your lawn." Or, under a gallery of European leaders: "They want to tell you how to vote. Tell them where to get off. Vote Conservative." Or even: "If you want a German for a neighbour, vote Labour."

It just goes to show what a big pusycat Brian Mawhinney is. Instead of commissioning instant hard-hitting copy from Lord Saatchi, yesterday the Tory chairman was bleating about Labour starting "one of the dirtiest election campaigns this country has seen". Apparently he had seen a party political broadcast, "with big boots stomping all over the country and clenched fists and lies about people's financial situation". We hope he gets over the shock. Because while Dr "Sofie" Mawhinney was realising he missed a huge opportunity to take the fight to Labour and exploit the New Year message from Klaus Kinkel, the German foreign minister.

What Dr Kinkel said was: "A general election will be held in Britain no later than May. The country must create clarity about its European policy. Britain is part of Europe. Europe needs Britain." You do not need to be an Enigma cryptographer to crack that one: if you're pro-European, don't vote Tory. Dr Kinkel,

well-known for being unhelpfully blunt, had blurted out what we all know to be true: that most governments in the European Union are praying for the election of a Labour government.

Leave aside the question of whether or not they are right in their desire to see Mr Blair in 10 Downing Street. We suspect they would find the Labour leader a tougher negotiator than they expected, and that this would be good for Europe, because there is much wrong with the EU constitution that they are not forced to face while they have the excuse of Lord Major's negativity, which acts as a kind of Common European Scapogot. But by speaking out, Dr Kinkel has been counter-productive.

There is already resentment among British voters, who feel they are being bossed about by "Europe" in general and Germany in particular. At a higher-minded level, there will be a backlash against Dr Kinkel for having breached the convention that governments do not take sides in other countries' elections.

Which raises the question, why shouldn't they? If it is the general view of European governments that it would be in the interests both of British voters and the EU to have a Labour government in Britain, then why should the German foreign minister not say so? After all, Mr Major's administration made it clear recently that Boris Yeltsin would be the "correct" democratic choice for Russians.



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At this point it is customary for us to berate Tory Eurosophes for hypocrisy, so let us take a different example. Lord Tebbit and William Cash, who might be expected to protest at Dr Kinkel's presumption, took a spin through the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen during the 1993 Danish referendum on Maastricht. In a bizarre effort to bolster the No vote, they told meetings of bemused Danish students and alternative lifestyles that they had been invited to share their experience of opposing the Treaty. Another relevant example was the occasion when Helmut Schmidt, the German Chancellor, pleaded with the 1974 Labour conference not to back a No vote in the referendum on Britain's EC membership.

Part of the reason for the convention of non-interference is a hangover from the Cold War. For years, the United States used its power to bully the peoples of small countries to vote the "right" way – against the communists – while the Soviet Union ran unconvincing elections in its puppet states. But there is a distinction: US interference in Vietnam, Chile and Nicaragua went far beyond expressing an opinion. There are, normally, circumstances where it is legitimate for the citizens of one country to take an interest in an election in another.

Many British voters were outraged at Ronald Reagan's partisanship in favouring Margaret Thatcher over Neil Kinnock in 1987. But if the US administration believed that Labour's non-nuclear defence policy was dangerous for the world, was it not right to say so? If we thought Jean Marie Le Pen were in danger of being elected in France, would we not be right to exhort the French people to pause and consider?

The British general election of 1997 may be a less sharply-defined instance. But this is an important election for the continent of Europe. We are not insulated from the world. We should be aware of our place in it and we should have thought at least fleetingly about how our vote will affect it.

The choice we make will influence the future of the EU – not just our place in it, but the Union itself. Despite Kenneth Clarke's rearguard action, it is now as certain as these things can be that a Tory government would not take Britain into the single European currency. Labour might not join at the launch, but two years from tonight, but would probably try to do so three to five years later.

So it matters to other EU countries who we have as Prime Minister. And there is nothing in principle wrong with their ministers saying so, although in practice it might not, as in this case, be wise. It would be wrong, however, for a government to spend money on a political campaign in another country. That

is why it was wrong for the EU to fund the European Movement, a propagandist pro-EU organisation in Britain, and right for it to stop doing so.

And that is why it is wrong for the Conservative Party to hide the sources of its funding, which means we are unable to know what foreign influences there are on our governing party. Perhaps that explains Dr Mawhinney's squeamish reluctance to make hay with Dr Kinkel's unwise words.

## Pop goes the honours system

**L**ord Lloyd Webber? Sir Paul McCartney? It is. It must be. At last, John Major is revealed as a true subversive. It is all a plot to undermine the honours system by ridicule. So much cleverer than all that Dave Spatsh's crudity of simply abolishing the whole obnoxious, class-ridden baubles. That would provoke a huge fuss in the *Mail* and *Express* about recognising the public worth of some old woman who has devoted her life to hospices. This way, the whole Heath Robinson edifice comes down in a gale of derision, and anyone who tries to defend it looks stupid. An OBE for Joan Collins? For services to drama? Was that for her performance in *The Stud*, or the one in the New York court?

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### New theatres needed to fit today's drama

**S**ir: Julian Mitchell, in deriding the National's preference for American musicals and expressionist revivals, accuses that theatre's directors of avoiding new work because the playright rather than the director or designer is the focus of attention ("Losing the plot at the National Theatre", 21 December).

The first part of his argument is sustainable by counting performances of new plays against those of the intruders. But has he correctly identified the reason? Can it simply be the taste of Richard Eyre?

It is strange to accuse one who nurtured and directed Charles Wood's magnificent *Tumbleweed* (BBC TV, 1986) of prejudice against contemporary playrights. Perhaps he has a good reason for preferring Broadway hoofers.

Over the long term, the character of any major theatre is inextricably shaped by its architecture. A sensible management, presented with the task of making a given theatre work either for a profit or to justify public subsidy, as many national institutions must today, will do the sort of show that works in that space.

The Olivier is superb for American musicals and Greek tragedy. At other times, in the words of Eyre himself, "it's a hard stage on which to focus attention, hard to animate. Its monumental scale militates against intimacy and its enormous volume gives rise to lamentable acoustics."

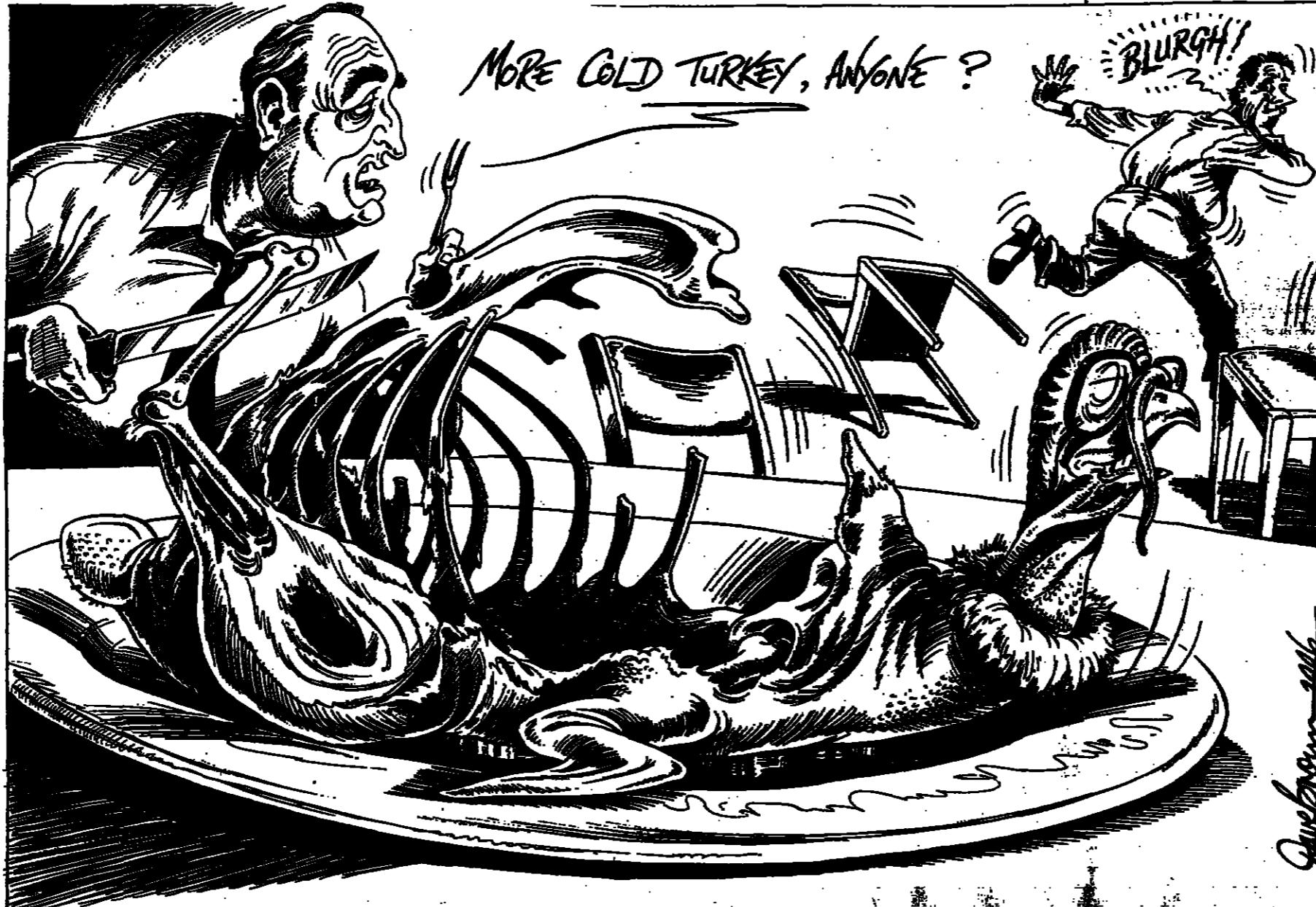
The Lyttleton, a proscenium-arch theatre where everybody can see, hear and enjoy room for the legs, also needs a broad brush from the designer and an attitude from the director to animate the unforgiving concrete. Ask any actor. Thus neither of the National's two big houses are playhouses for contemporary playrights.

It would be unreasonable simply to blame the architect, who from 1964 to 1966 was answerable to a building committee which included George Devine, Michael Elliott, Bill Gaskill and Michel St Denis as well as directors of the sort stigmatised by Mitchell. Both theatres are the product of theatrical and architectural tastes of the mid-Sixties. This has inevitably led the National away from new plays and even from Shakespeare, except in the grand style, and towards spectacle.

In 1973 Elliott recounted before the very different Royal Exchange, Manchester: "And so looking round at the buildings we have already left our great-grandchildren these last years we may well ask what will they say of them and of us. If we are not careful, I think they will stand in the sunlight of other days, stilling tolerantly and say, 'They were good men according to their lights, but the men were dull and the lights dim'."

Are we doing any better today with the Lottery windfall? On the whole, yes. At the Royal Court, Stephen Daldry, now a greater friend of new writing than Mitchell, gives him credit for, was dissuaded from removing the proscenium arch to create a wider canvas for director and designer.

He concluded that the Court was and should remain a writer's theatre, in which the often illogical fabric "gives to new writing the authority of the past" (Gaskill). But grave dangers remain: committee of the good and the great, bemused by fashionable but theatrically inexperienced star architects



designing from the outside in; arts bureaucrats urging ever bigger theatres to satisfy "the business plan" and forgetting that a successful theatre in whatever league is a full theatre and that you do not design a church for Easter Sunday.

If Mitchell's desideratum is to be gained then playhouses for playrights are a prerequisite. Last year David Edgar pointed out that most of Britain's playhouses were too big or too small and, preferring the Court, Cottesloe and Young Vic to the monsters of both the South Bank and Barbican, opined that "if every major city in Britain had a flexible 400-seater – and London half a dozen more – the future of classical, contemporary and new-play production would look brighter than it does now."

Should not the priority for Europeans to negotiate and agree on the final constitution of the European Union, the complete list of powers to be handed over to the Union, and how democratic accountability is to be achieved? This is what matters – not the pictures on euro banknotes.

**MALCOLM LAURENCE**  
Richmond, Surrey

### Sign of the times

**S**ir: I am sorry that Derek Allen (letter, 28 December) is "not ... prepared to go through the inconvenient and slightly tacky process of signing in person" to collect the various benefits that he obtains from the rest of us who do pay tax. His attitude vindicates the introduction of the Job Seekers Allowance.

**WILLIAM WESTLAKE**  
Bristol

### Mystery journey towards Europe

**S**ir: The process of European integration has been a mystery tour towards an unknown destination ("Europe's where the action is", 19 December; "We didn't vote for a country called Europe", 21 December; letters, 23 December).

This incremental open-ended approach may have been necessary in the early years of the European Community, but now it alarms even devout Europhiles. It has led to the absurd situation where Kofi Annan and John Redwood cannot even agree on what the UK signed up to in 1973.

Is it not time, therefore, for Europeans to negotiate and agree on the final constitution of the European Union, the complete list of powers to be handed over to the Union, and how democratic accountability is to be achieved?

This is what matters – not the pictures on euro banknotes.

**MALCOLM LAURENCE**  
Richmond, Surrey

### Heading for the human zoo

**S**ir: I am astonished when I hear people discussing what humans will be doing a hundred, two hundred, five hundred years from now ("Computer dilemma as scientist warns of 'unfriendly' machines" 18 December).

Even supposing we survive the

genetically engineered viruses that numerous Ann Shokri Kyo-style terrorist groups will release in the next few decades, a hundred years from now the human species will be irrelevant.

There's a popular view among religious nuts and egomaniacs that "they will never build a machine that is as intelligent or creative as a human being." Get a grip! The human brain is fantastic, but it's still no more than a mass of electrochemical switches.

Researchers in the field of artificial intelligence are rapidly solving the complex connection patterns required for true thought. Within 20 years we will build a device equal to a human brain. The term "artificial intelligence" will be inadequate; we will have created a new life-form.

In partnership with this new being we shall design a superior successor, and at the instant of its birth the human race will become a footnote in history. The new species will evolve again and again, rapidly redesigning and improving itself, leaving us far behind.

Will our masters be unfriendly or dangerous? Possibly. But considering that we could pose absolutely no threat to them (any plot we might dream up for their destruction would be quashed, as they would always be 10 steps ahead of us), I doubt they would bother eradicating our species.

A more likely scenario is that our masters would treat us in the same way as we treat chimpanzees. The future of the human race is already decided; eternity on some earth-

like nature reserve, protected and safe, while another species explores the universe and evolves itself into God.

**ANDREW WYATT**  
Northampton

### American lesson on gun control

**S**ir: As a child growing up in New Jersey, I knew where my father kept his guns: in an open cupboard in our playroom. We had enough sense never to touch them, let alone mess about with them, and they were never misused, but when Kennedy was killed my father got rid of the guns, because it was then understood how easily they could fall into the wrong hands.

This is why guns will be banned in the UK. It seems odd that gun-owners such as R Winney (letter, 23 December) are so inclined to take this personally. Of course we are all paying a price for the madness of a few, but responsible (former) gun-owners pay willingly.

**PEGGY THOMAS**  
London SE26

**S**ir: In the third paragraph of his article ("The Lords shoot themselves in the foot", 19 December), Donald Macintyre seems to concede that the Firearms (Amendment) Bill may be too draconian, but goes on to use the Second Reading debate in the Lords as a stick with which to beat the hereditary peerage.

Disregarding two brief

interventions, 35 (not 31) peers spoke, of whom nine (not two) were crossbenchers. Mr Macintyre employs the legitimate tactic of highly selective quotations in support of his argument, so perhaps I may counter with some (but accurate) statistics.

Of those who spoke, 25 per cent of the Liberal Democrat peers, 50 per cent of the Labour ones, 75 per cent of the Conservatives and 100 per cent of the crossbenchers thought the Bill went too far. Judging by the most recent opinion polls, most of those who have thought the matter through now feel the same way.

**LORD MONSON**  
House of Lords  
London SW1

### Starvation diet

**S**ir: You say in your editorial ("Beware of the anti-hunting roundheads in full cry", 24 December) that "killing for food" is "essential" and we shouldn't be squeamish about it.

Killing for food is an absolutely inessential and clinically malevolent activity. The consumption of dead animals is a highly inefficient way of feeding ourselves. Just ask the many millions who are malnourished and starving, partly due to

(predominantly Western) meat-eating, which ties up land that could otherwise be used for the production of crops.

But no, perhaps I should take your own advice and stop being squeamish about a few million destitute (and dead) foreigners. After all, meat-eaters' bloody appetites simply must be satisfied.

**CHINTAN NANAVATI**  
Stafford

### The strain of late trains

**S**ir: It is not just the rail inquiries services that are off the rails (report, 24 December), but the reliability of the services themselves.

Recently, I have made six journeys between Oxford and Nottingham, and two between Oxford and Great Malvern. On only one of these eight occasions has the train been on time. All the others were late, mostly far in excess of an hour per journey.

On one occasion, I was advised to ignore two earlier services to avoid waits for connections, only for the suggested service to be cancelled – with a lengthy delay, no remaining connection, and taxis for eight from Coventry to Oxford. A two-and-a-half-hour journey became more than six hours.

My "Customer Charter" claim resulted in an insulting £5 travel voucher from Central Trains, and a nonsensical apology from the manager, promising that my letter would be studied.

Compensation is not offered if trains are less than an hour late, according to government guidelines. That's all right, is it?

**ROGER COWELL**  
Wimborne, Dorset

### Help children to handle grammar

**S**ir: It was worrying to read Ann Barnes, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English, claim that children cannot distinguish between the three spellings "their", "there" and "they're" if they see them written down together on the blackboard ("Teachers mark down grammar questions", 24 December).

In my experience as a primary teacher, children learning about spelling (and indeed any aspect of how to write their language) benefit from full access to information about it.

In this case that would include the opportunity to compare and contrast different spellings, as well as knowledge about the grammatical functions of the three forms.

Ms Barnes appears to recommend that we deny children access to knowledge because they might not be able to cope with it. This is the sort of patronising orthodoxy which has befooled the teaching of English over the past 20 years, and which one might have hoped a national association for teaching the subject would campaign to stamp out.

**SUE PALMER**  
Truro, Cornwall

### Volunteer snub

**S**ir: I am amazed that the homeless charities have the arrogance to question the motives of volunteers who help during the Christmas period and then, in the next breath, have the effrontery to seek volunteers for next Christmas ("Help wanted: Mother Teresa need not apply", 23 December).

Presumably applicants may then be approved only if they can satisfy the charities' examining body as to the "propriety" of their motives.

Giving up your time for the homeless – for whatever reason – is surely a greater sacrifice than lobbing over a few quid from the relative comfort of a warm, welcoming home.

**P E BIRCH**  
Harlow, Essex

## Inequality can seriously damage your health

by Harvey Cole

**At a certain stage of economic development, health and mortality are increasingly influenced by changes in the relative position of groups in society**

**Being poor in a rich country is far worse for our health than being poor in a poor nation.**

So stated a leading article in *The Independent* a month ago. But is it correct?

Since 1910 there have only been two decades when the civilian expectation of life in Britain rose by more than 2.8 years: 1911-21, when it went up 6.5 years and includes the First World War, and 1940-51, spanning the Second World War, when the improvement was greater, at 6.3 years. This is particularly striking as it was achieved in spite of more than 100,000 men, women and children being killed by bombing.

Questions about income distribution and poverty in developed countries are raised in the recent book by Richard Wilkinson, a senior research fellow at the University of Sussex. It is called *Unhealthy Societies*, and much of what he says demands attention from politicians.

The fact that health improved between 1940 and 1945 is widely known. But to attribute this to the better average levels of nutrition brought about by food rationing is simplistic. Standards rose by far more than can be accounted for by this factor. Besides, it can hardly be argued that the quality of housing and the level of medical care – other important ingredients of health – improved significantly during the war.

On the other hand, the sense of shared purpose and the compression of the spread between high and low wages as unemployment was virtually eliminated sharply reduced inequality and generated a high degree of social cohesion. This was reflected in a narrowing of the differential in death rates between social classes. All improved, but until 1951 the improvement was greater at the lower end.

Since 1951, income differences have widened – slowly at first and then very rapidly during the Seventies and Eighties. Occupational death rates in successive censuses have precisely mirrored the growing gap. While overall mortality has continued to decline, something happened to slow down the rate of improvement after 1979. The most likely culprit is rapid inequality of incomes since then.

The evidence from Britain is reinforced by studies in other countries. In 1980, death rates for white American males varied from about 40 per 10,000 person years for those with incomes over \$32,500 to more than 80 where income was less than \$7,500.

Even more striking is the evidence that changes in income distribution are reflected in health and mortality. In 1970, death rates in Japan were closely similar to those in Britain, and the variation in incomes was also comparable. By 1990, Japan had the highest life expectancy in the world and the narrowest income differentials.

Another country with low mortality and a high degree of income equality is Sweden. This is a particularly interesting example because of the sharp differences between Sweden and Japan in other respects. Sweden has one of the highest income tax rates, whereas Japan's is one of the lowest. While the Japanese have a very low divorce rate and the standard nuclear family remains the norm, half of all Swedes are born outside wedlock and divorce rates are high. Nevertheless, the link between health and equality is strong enough to survive, and Sweden's mortality rates are better than ours for every social class – a margin of 20 per cent

The writer is Deputy Leader of Hampshire County Council

at the top, widening to 150 per cent for D2Es.

It is often suggested that the economic success of the so-called Asian tigers – the emerging countries of Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Korea and Thailand – is due to enterprise, hard work and self-reliance rather than state-financed welfare services. This is to overlook an important feature which they all have in common since 1960, the degree of variation in income levels has been sharply reduced, and thus increasing equality has helped to fuel economic growth.

Once societies have reached a certain level of economic development – around an average income of \$3,000 per head – health and mortality tend to be increasingly influenced by changes in the relative position of groups within them. Thus, one study showed that even when the real value of the incomes of the poorest 20 per cent were maintained, and those right at the top received more money, infant mortality rates started to rise.

Why this should be is clearly connected with how "comfortable" a society is with itself. Social cohesion and equal distribution of incomes are not the same thing, but are clearly related.

Wilkinson says that one good guide to a society is how people drive. Increasingly aggressive behaviour on the roads marks the UK today, with the emergence of road rage and even the beginnings of a contribution to the figures for premature mortality.

An increasingly anxious society will tend to damage its health more by drinking, smoking and taking drugs. Studies also indicate that accidents become more frequent and depression more widespread. None of this is good for health – individual or national.

Crime, particularly violent crime, is likely to increase in such conditions, and much of an apparently rising real income has to be devoted to "defensive expenditure" – burglar alarms, security guards, prisons and policing, while thieves keep the locksmiths in business. All this poses a challenge to politicians. Should we argue with it like this:

We cannot say for certain that Wilkinson is right, although there is a multitude of studies that suggest he may be. There is always a temptation to find reasons for disagreeing with unpalatable conclusions: all sorts of peculiar arguments are being put forward to discredit the idea of global warming, and the chairman of the giant tobacco company BAT still refuses to acknowledge that there could be a link between smoking and lung cancer.

But let us suppose that there is a link, even a weak one, between widening income differentials and rising relative death rates among those lower down the scale. Let MPs make that assumption, and think seriously about the implications. The Christmas recess is an appropriate time for such an exercise. Then I invite them to say how this might change their own approach to political and economic problems. It is a question which deserves serious consideration and a considered answer rather than a few anodyne words or some pre-packaged shorthand phrases from party headquarters.

I look forward to receiving 650 well-considered replies, and to analysing and reporting on them.

The writer is Deputy Leader of Hampshire County Council

Now he is arguing with Scarborough Council and North Yorkshire County Council over whether they will give an extra £50,000 next year – in recognition of higher running costs in the new theatre building – on top of the £211,500 they granted last year. Closure, says Ayckbourn, is not a danger in the short term, but he sees the current row as the ghost of Christmas yet to come.

You would think that Ayckbourn's case was proven. His devotion to Scarborough is doing for the town what David Hockney has done for Saltaire, or McCartney for Liverpool (also honoured today). All his plays are premiered here (he adds at least one to his repertoire of 51 every year). They invariably go on, like *By Jeeves* at the moment, to be big hits in London's West End.

The £5.2m premises opened in April, and much admired. There are two theatres, a cinema, an education centre for children, bars and restaurants. Productions have been critically well-received, attendances have doubled. Alan Ayckbourn has at last given this decaying seaside resort, known to the Victorians as "the Queen of the Watering Places", a fresh option beyond bravely sporting

## Why Ayckbourn will fight on for his theatre

by Jack O'Sullivan

**B**ritain appreciates Alan Ayckbourn's contribution to the theatre: our most prolific and successful playwright is knighted in today's New Year's honours. But the big question is: will his beloved Scarborough also acknowledge the achievements of its adoptive son? In plain practical terms, will the local council subsidise Ayckbourn's acclaimed theatre properly, or spend the money instead on 22 public lavatories?

For while Lord Lloyd Webber, Ayckbourn's fellow thespian also honoured this morning, is awash in money, art and ex-wives, the muse of Middle England has more modest aims. He is fighting to keep afloat Scarborough's newly built Stephen Joseph theatre, thereby acting as a standard-bearer nationally for those campaigning to protect the excellence of regional theatre. And there is a real lavatorial problem. The cash-strapped Scarborough Council will decide next Monday where best to spend its pennies.

The precarious state of the theatre venture was underlined in the summer, when the theatre's board decided that they would close by October without more grant funding. Ayckbourn found himself with new premises he could not afford to keep open. Eventually, a bit of creative accounting brought in some lottery money, normally earmarked for building, to be used for running costs. The crisis was temporarily averted.

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**"They'll finish up with a town where you can only buy shoes and get drunk. They're preparing for a living hell"**

Oliver Cromwell, who closed all the theatres for a long time. We have felt guilty ever since. We think that art is a luxury, but it's a necessity. You can't trade building a road against building a hospital if it means you can't reach the hospital. Everything is interlinked. Likewise one councillor said to me: "What's the point in spending money in schools educating our children for the arts, if, when they leave school, there is nowhere to enjoy the arts?"

"We want to improve our town. Something has to be done, not just to attract the holiday-makers, but for the spiritual health of the place. I could have left here years ago. I have nothing that keeps me here except loyalty. I could go to a dozen places and say how about trying out this new play and they would be happy to do so. But I'm staying."

He sees his theatre as a vital nursery for new talent (half a dozen new playwrights are on his books). "I'm known as one of the most commercial playwrights of the 20th century, but every one of my plays started out in a publicly subsidised theatre. The private sector does very little to develop new scripts."

"Would he, then, after 40 years, shake the Scarborough dust from his feet if his beloved theatre closed?"

"It's scenario I don't dare to think about. I'm getting on. I'd continue to write and do my own plays. But I'm very hopeful. It's no coincidence that, just when the newspaper letter-writers are running down the theatre, the papers are also printing all sorts of plans – to refurbish the open air theatre, develop the harbour, do something with the disused open air swimming pool. We have suddenly made lots of things seem possible. People are saying: 'They did it, why can't we?' An attitude of mind is being challenged which is summed up by a man who said: 'If you're so good, what are you doing around here?' We still don't expect to have the best. But I believe that we are one of the best theatres in the country and the publicity it is receiving is worth millions to the town. It deserves the subsidy."

But what about the public lavatories? I asked. Should Scarborough sacrifice 22 loos for the literati?

"We have a couple of dozen toilets in the theatre," came the reply. "People are very welcome to use them – they're on the ground floor, just past the box office," said the man bound for Buckingham Palace.

## Animal WRONGS



**They would never have survived another night in the open.**

Beni and Bonney – two tiny puppies, were found shivering and terrified in a ditch on a freezing December night. Pitifully thin and covered in weeping sores, it seemed they had never known love and care.

The Blue Cross gave them the first kindness they had known, as well as urgently-needed veterinary care. After several weeks with us, the pups made a full recovery.

To treat, feed and care for the pups cost around £150. The Blue Cross relies entirely on your generosity to continue its life-saving work. Your monthly gift of £2 or more could help save more tiny lives.

Please help save more animals like Beni and Bonney by supporting the work of The Blue Cross.

Please send me more information about how I can help animals like Beni and Bonney by making a gift to The Blue Cross.

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: The Blue Cross, Preparatory Room 765C, Shilton Road, Burford, OX18 4BR. Reg. Charity No. 224392.

**THE BLUE CROSS**

## Spicing up the mating game

David Vigar listens closely to the Spice Girls' lyrics and finds them peppered with home truths



**There is no need to say you love me  
It would be better left unsaid  
I'm giving you everything that joy can bring  
this I swear**

**And all that I ask from you is a promise you will  
be there**

**Spice Girls don't tell boys "I love you". They  
don't want to hear it, either. Instead, they negotiate.  
Love is dead – but commitment counts.**

**This girl isn't stupid enough to end up lying  
awake wondering "will you still love me tomorrow?"  
And she is certainly not going to have tears  
on her pillow – Kylie can keep them.**

**The Spice Girl will say "I love you", but not  
to a boy, to her mother, in the song "Mama".  
This adds an extra dimension to the Spice character – not to mention the sheer marketing  
genius of softening up the potential purchaser**

of the Spice Girl mini-rucksack or A4 lever file.

Meanwhile, back with Mr Right-ish, once the ground rules are sorted, the Spice Girl can relax, dim the lights and get seductive with the best of them. This is stage three of the romance: and, of course, the third single, "2 Become 1". This is nearer to standard pop drivel, plus a little pycnophobie, but she is still giving it the chat and taking the initiative. And ultimately, without missing a beat or destroying the come-on mood, she issues the most straightforward instruction of the lot:

**Be a little wiser baby, put it on, put it on**

**If you are trying to tell teenagers about  
straight sex, that must be worth quite a few government booklets.**

**The irony is that while the chattering classes  
dissect "women's issues" and titter at pop-star politics,  
these finny little messages are probably doing  
more to shape young women's attitudes than any  
number of consciousness-raising seminars.**

**And don't forget young men. The Spice Girls  
are what little boys' dreams are made of. But will  
their male fans see them as sexy sirens? No  
more, I suspect, than the average Arsenal fan  
would shout racist abuse at Ian Wright. The times  
have changed. And popular icons have influence  
that intellectuals can only dream of.**

**The Spice Girls reach parts of the population  
that John Major and Tony Blair will never reach.  
Few hear all of the party leaders' many words,  
many hear all of the Spice Girls' few.**

**And when it comes to any kind of philosophy  
or world view – any attempt to reconcile aspiration  
and altruism, greed and idealism – the one  
that is buzzing in many a young head is neither  
Tory nor Labour, but Spice – and not without  
its lesson for politicians:**

**The race is on to get out of the boar  
The top is high so your roots are forgotten  
Giving is good as long as you're getting  
What's driving you it's ambition and betting**

**The writer is director of communications at the  
European Movement.**

# business & city

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## Sorrell close to £3.6m shares bonanza

Matthew Horsman  
Media Editor

Martin Sorrell, the chief executive of advertising giant WPP, is just weeks away from a multi-million pound pay-out under the controversial incentive scheme established earlier this year. If the WPP share price remains above 230p until March, Mr Sorrell will be awarded shares worth at least £3.6m.

The shares closed last night at 251.5p, marking the fourth trading day they have stayed above the 230p trigger price. Under the incentive scheme, worth as much as £14.3m over five years if all targets are met, the shares must stay at or above the target for 60 consecutive

trading days and exceed the growth record of the overall stock market.

Thereafter, shares will be awarded at 265p and 304p. Mr Sorrell also has salary, benefits, bonuses and previously awarded share options that could push his five-year total to just over £27m.

The conditions attached to the incentive package, approved by shareholders during a raucous meeting last summer, were defended at the time by Mr Sorrell and the WPP remunerations committee as "nearly impossible" to achieve.

They added that Mr Sorrell had proven his commitment to the company by agreeing to invest more than £2m of his

own money in WPP shares.

Mr Sorrell has already been awarded shares worth £877,000 under a pre-existing incentive scheme, as part of his 1995 pay.

The rich package was criticised by some institutional shareholders because it appeared to reward Mr Sorrell merely for overseeing the return of the company's shares to the level they had reached when he first joined. Since then, the price zoomed to the 900p level, only to collapse following an acquisition binge and the effects of the recession.

Meanwhile, it emerged yesterday that WPP was on target to achieve revenue growth of between 8 and 9 per cent in 1996, well above the conservative target of 5 per cent established last year and higher than the industry average of between 6.5 and 7 per cent. Operating margins will exceed 10.6 per cent, up from 9.6 per cent in 1995 and in line with Mr Sorrell's promise of a percentage point increase in profit margins per year.

Analysts said yesterday the company should continue to perform well in 1997 and 1998, making the top stock price target of 304p eminently achievable.

WPP should see pre-tax profits hit at least £150m in 1996, rising to about £185m next year, when margins are expected to improve to about 11.6 per cent. Higher revenues next year will



It pays to advertise: Martin Sorrell stands to make a fortune if WPP shares remain above 230p until March. The shares closed last night at 251.5p marking the fourth day they have stayed over the trigger price

come despite the lack of one-off events such as the US presidential election and the Olympics, which helped fuel spending on advertising this year.

The margin growth has been achieved by increasing productivity, with head count rising last year by about 3 per cent, far below the rate of revenue growth. But WPP remains below the best performers in the sector, including US giant Omnicom

and Interpublic, which managed margins of more than 13 per cent.

WPP current trades at a discount not only to the highly-valued media sector but even to some of the companies in its peer group of publicly traded advertising and media buying companies. Until the recent rise in the shares, Mr Sorrell's firm, which owns Ogilvy & Mather and J. Walter Thompson, was even at a discount to

Courtland, the troubled advertising company formerly known as Saatchi & Saatchi.

If WPP traded at a similar price-to-earnings ratio as CIA Group, the media buying company, its shares would already be at the 275p level, or higher than all but the top trigger price in Mr Sorrell's incentive package. If they matched the trading multiple of the sector's best performer, Abbott Mead Vickers, the shares would

even exceed the 304p top target.

According to the media team at Salomon Brothers, institutional investors remain underweighted in WPP, and the shares are rated a buy.

Salomon said the company was well placed to withstand a downturn in the economy, given the mix of its marketing, public relations and advertising businesses.

Comment, page 17

## Peps war as tax deadline looms

Nic Cicurini

A bitter-price war among sellers of unit trusts and personal equity plans looks set to break out in the next three months, with several companies offering to pay investors at least £25 each to take out a plan through them.

The rivalry comes as hundreds of thousands of investors prepare to pour billions of pounds into Peps in the run-up to the end of the 1996 tax year in April.

The industry, which will have attracted almost £6bn of retail funds into unit trusts in 1996 and hundreds of millions more into investment trusts close to the all-time record two years earlier, is preparing to match previous last-minute investment surges in the first months of 1997.

Execution-only brokers, who last year grabbed up to 10 per cent of the market by offering cut-price deals, more than tripling their share in the past five years, are poised to do even better this year.

Their optimism is boosted by hopes of a neutral stock market – at least – in the first half of 1997. It also expects thousands of investors to invest all of their £6,000 allowance for the next tax year, ahead of a general election which Labour is expected to win.

The PEP Shop, based in Nottingham, is offering a Maximum Assured Discount (MAD) scheme, whereby it promises to match the lowest commission made by any competitor and pay a further £25 to savers.

Haydn Green, founder of the PEP Shop, said: "If you look at how discounting operates, it is a case of extending the principle by degree. Once you start, you have to keep going."

"We have found that there are two types of investors, those who want some advice when making a decision and those capable of making up their own minds. We can cater for the second sort extremely cheaply."

Its scheme comes as several other execution-only PEP sellers offer similar schemes, allowing savers to play one broker against another.

PEP Direct, which operates a telephone service in Wolverhampton, yesterday launched its own guarantee to undercut any rival by at least £5.

Brokers hope to survive by living off the 0.5 per cent renewal fee they receive each year if their clients stick with a PEP. But Don Clark, owner of PEP Direct, said: "More and more companies are offering discounts."

"The danger is that one or two may go out of business because they have to wait at least a year before they recoup any money."

## Crest hammers out penalties

Jill Treanor

Officials from Crest, the City's new automated share settlement system, are to meet with the City's regulatory bodies early in the new year to hammer out a standardised way to levy penalties on firms which miss settlement dates for deals.

The penalties are likely to take the form of fines but could also involve naming firms which are persistent offenders.

Crest is aiming to persuade the regulators, such as the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA) and the recognised investment exchanges, such as the Stock Exchange, to agree that deals struck on their exchanges are subject to Crest rules.

"If we can get all the regulators and the recognised investment exchanges to agree to

their members or contracts being subject to Crest settlement discipline it will make it more effective and give it more clout," said Paul Symons, manager of Crest.

While Crest aims to have the new procedures in place by April or May, the Exchange is planning temporary rules.

Richard Kisby, director of market services at the Exchange, told compliance officers: "We support Crest's intention to introduce [a disciplinary regime] across all its participants and believe that such a regime should be at least as effective as the 'buying-in' process operated under Talsman."

The temporary measures include a £10 fine for deals which are seven days beyond their intended settlement date but the fine can reach £25,000.

## Christmas all over again as the Footsie smashes 4,100 barrier

Magnus Grindom

The stock market looks set to end the year at an all-time high as the blue chip FTSE 100 index powered through the 4,100 barrier yesterday to a record close. The pound was also in fine fettle yet again, hitting a four-year high against the Japanese yen at one stage and ending near its peak against the German mark.

Despite the likely impact of the currency's strength on overseas earnings, the Footsie stayed aside thinly-populated dealing rooms and two of the top 100 shares going ex-dividend to end 24.7 points higher at 4,115.7.

The index was fuelled by the

breaking of new records on Wall Street, where the Dow was showing a reading 22 points higher as London closed. The US market is now showing a gain of around 29 per cent on the year.

The final tally in London was well above the previous record of 4,092.5 set only on Christmas Eve, although City observers cautioned against reading too much into the move.

Steve Wright, a market analyst with brokers Barclays de Zoete Wedd, pointed out that volumes, with 421.5m shares traded yesterday, were well below normal levels. He described it as an "end of year rally" with some of the institutions' cash

positions being unwound. "Sentiment has been quite good in the last week or two that the market would end on a high. There has been a lot of corporate activity generating a lot of cash, which will be handed back to the institutions."

Barclays is looking for the Footsie to end 1997 at 4,300, but Mr Wright said the current strength of the market was a selling opportunity. Utilities had recovered from the possibility of Labour introducing a windfall tax, but there could still be further shocks, he warned.

"I can see some of that nervousness coming back into the market if certain things are said by certain politicians, particularly over things like ACT

advance corporation tax". Philip Isherwood of Kleinwort Benson Securities agreed that there was nothing fundamental behind yesterday's market strength.

"It's not a question of what's going on. It's a question of what's not going on."

The main story yesterday was the absence of selling pressure since London and New York survived key "witching hours" on the Friday before Christmas, when five different index futures and options expired simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic. The market's rise swamped the move ex-dividend by British Telecom and Severn Trent, which knocked 3.9 points off the index.

Meanwhile, sterling remained firm, ending marginally ahead at 195.90 against the yen and 70 pence up against the mark at 2,634.0. Against the dollar, the pound ended at \$1.6905, up from \$1.6881. Dealers said interest rate hopes continued to be behind the rise, although volumes traded remain thin.

London's blue chips were

## Manufacturing in UK continues to go downhill

Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

The importance of manufacturing to the British economy continues to slide with only two British areas now in the "top 20" regions in Europe.

Based on the percentage of the workforce employed in the sector, only the East Midlands, with 35.4 per cent in manufacturing and the West Midlands with 34.4 per cent, are among the top regions.

Baden-Wuerttemberg in Germany comes first with 43 per cent

bility in Italy with 42 per cent, according to the most recent figures from the European labour force survey. Six of the top 10 areas are in Germany, three in Italy and one in Spain.

The North of England comes 27th with 31.3 per cent of its workforce in manufacturing, just above the European average of 30.2 per cent. The 11 other regions in the United Kingdom are all below the average figure.

The North West comes 34th out of 75. East Anglia 44th, Scotland 48th, Northern Ireland 51st and the South West 52nd. The South East is 65th, just

ahead of areas such as Sicily and the Mediterranean region of France. Even Madeira comes 26th.

John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB general union which collated the statistics, said the figures amounted to an indictment of the government.

"Nothing better illustrates

the dismal failure of Tory industrial policy than this league table. There was a time when Britain was the workshop of the world and the West Midlands was the workshop of Britain. Now the East Midlands scrapes into the top 20.

"It was fashionable in the early days of Thatcherism to say that manufacturing did not matter. It does. The prosperity of Europe's regions is in direct relationship to their manufacturing base. The UK needs a sustained period of investment in its manufacturing industries to secure the country's future."

Figures from the European survey also show that British regions have the second highest percentage of part-time workers in Europe behind the Netherlands. The top four areas, all in Holland, vary from 35 per cent to 40 per cent.

The latest figures from the European labour force survey show that the UK's manufacturing industry has lost 1.2 million jobs since 1980. The number of workers in manufacturing fell from 10.5 million in 1980 to 9.3 million in 1995.

## Dutch insurer strikes record \$3.5bn US deal

Jill Treanor  
Banking Correspondent

Aegon, the Dutch insurer which owns Scottish Equitable, yesterday pulled off the largest life insurance acquisition in the US and the biggest ever by a Dutch firm when it struck a \$3.5bn deal to buy Providian Corporation of the US.

The acquisition, which is expected to be concluded in the first half of the New Year, will increase the size of Aegon by 25 per cent. It will almost double the size of the group's US earnings.

Providian Corporation is based in Louisville, Kentucky and consists of Providian Bancorp, a consumer lending organisation, and three insurance agencies – agency, direct insurance and capital management.

The three insurance operations will become part of Aegon USA, while Bancorp will be spun off to existing Providian shareholders immediately prior to the acquisition.

The deal involves a tax-free share swap under which Providian shareholders receive Aegon shares worth \$2.62bn and Aegon USA takes over loans worth \$780m and preferred stock worth \$100m.

This record-setting acquisition is fully in line with Aegon's

stated strategy. It is earnings enhancing, highly compatible and will provide a healthy boost to our growth into the next century," said Kees Storm, chairman of Aegon.

Irving Bailey, chairman of Providian Corporation said: "The deal provides our insurance activities with a committed partner ... while freeing Providian Bancorp to develop its considerable potential as an independent consumer lending specialist."

"Our shareholders thus end up with stakes in two strong and successful companies, each a fast growing leader in its respective field," Mr Bailey added.

The deal comes at the end of a year which has seen rapid consolidation in the insurance industry world-wide.

The industry is facing fierce competition from new entrants to the business, such as banks, as well as fighting rising costs.

In the UK, Royal and Sun Alliance merged earlier this year putting hundreds of jobs of risk.

Two French insurance companies, AXA and Union des Assurances de Paris, also announced merger plans in November to create the world's second-largest insurance company after Nippon Life of Japan.

STOCK MARKETS					
FTSE 100			Dow Jones*		
2,170			6,510		
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6	20,402	20,000	
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6	15,600	15,200	
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6	15,200	14,800	
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6	14,800	14,400	
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6	14,400	14,000	
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6	14,000	13,600	
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6	13,600	13,200	
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6	13,200	12,800	
4,115.70	+24.70	+0.6</td			



COMMENT

## Remoteness that characterised a sad decline

Lord Weinstock has chosen the medium of the *Financial Times* for a long and reflective series of interviews to mark his departure from GEC after 33 years at the helm - well, near departure anyway, for he retains the curious title of honorary chairman emeritus. There's not much in there that's going to surprise close observers of this clever and resilient industrialist, except perhaps this - the admission that he never visits factories. Lord Weinstock justifies this extraordinary omission on the basis that if he visited one plant every half-day, he could not get round all GEC's plants in a year. The effect would be minimal anyway, he claims, since people to be polled wouldn't be back for quite a while.

Perhaps Lord Weinstock is just being a little more honest than his peers in disclosing this apparent lapse. Most busy executives rarely have time to visit the factory floor. Certain of them have actually made a virtue of it. Lord White, the late chairman of Hanson America, liked to boast that in all his years at Hanson he had never visited any of the businesses he controlled. Indeed he would have regarded it as a failure to have done so, for to visit a business is only to allow yourself to be polluted by excuses as to why things cannot be done. Much better, he always used to say, just to set a target and hold management to it.

Though he wouldn't put it in quite that way, this was plainly Lord Weinstock's way

too. He ran his company via a book of numbers, a set of "ratios and statistics". As a way of keeping his company out of financial danger, and of delivering solid, if unspectacular, value to shareholders, it plainly worked. But there is also arrogance and a certain bankruptcy of leadership in a managing director who thinks it is not necessary to visit his places of production. Such management remoteness from the workplace may not have been a cause of Britain's post-war industrial decline, but it certainly seems reasonable to see it as symptomatic.

Of course it is not possible for a man in Lord Weinstock's position to get round all his factories. But to visit none? The secret of good management in a large group of companies is not so very different from that of a small company, most successful entrepreneurs will tell you. It is to be involved with the product and the people who make it and sell it, to demand the impossible and to instill in employees that sense of enthusiasm and purpose that helps them meet those demands. Is that really possible from a darkened room in Stanhope Gate? Of course it isn't. Let's hope George Simpson, Lord Weinstock's successor, visits a few more factories.

When Martin Sorrell's breath-takingly rich pay package at WPP was finally approved in June last year, after some

adjustment by outraged institutional shareholders, the company said it was very unlikely the full amount would ever be paid. The targets were just too demanding, said both Mr Sorrell and the chairman of the remuneration committee.

One and a half years later and they don't look quite so demanding. The WPP share price topped 250p yesterday, well above the 230p target price that delivers Mr Sorrell his £3.5m initial payout, not counting his already princely salary, bonuses, pensions and the like. Sure, the shares have to maintain their target levels for 60 consecutive days, and yes, the company must outperform the market, but both requirements look within reach.

Mr Sorrell has to hit 265p to get the next tranche of shares and then 304p by September 1999 to get the full whack of about £27m, of which £14m at least will be in the form of free shares.

Will he go all the way? Analysts are beginning to think so. Advertising spend was up by between 6 and 7 per cent in 1996, but WPP, following Mr Sorrell's restructuring efforts, saw its revenues climb by nearly 9 per cent per cent and margins widen to more than 10 per cent. Pre-tax profits should grow to £185m next year. If investors were willing to give WPP the same measure of support they award to the sector leader, Abbott Mead Vickers - which trades on more than 20 times next year's earnings - the shares would already

be high enough for Mr Sorrell to get the full package.

That the shares are still on a rather subdued 16 times earnings is a measure of the City's caution at backing Mr Sorrell a second time. He's already lost one fortune. Many are still furious that he's been given the chance to rebalance and make himself a packet merely by returning the company to where it once was. To be fair on Mr Sorrell, he has managed, through some energetic cost cutting and some excellent client prospecting work to get the show back on the road.

There is still a chance the shares will continue to underperform, depriving Mr Sorrell of his pile. But with two pretty decent years for the economy and advertising ahead of him, and with most analysts projecting better-than-average growth at WPP, the chances he will see his way into the serious money have to be rated as reasonably good and getting better. If these are tough targets, it makes you wonder about the softer ones enshrined in many an executive long term incentive plan.

Africans ran out a year ago and the negotiations to renew it ended in the autumn. Today's already twice-extended deadline for a new deal is almost certain to be breached.

Both sides claim to have been suffering from the rugged end to the old arrangements. De Beers has complained bitterly of the "leakage" of Russian rough diamonds, nominally intended for domestic use, onto international markets. The result has been to blow a hole in the CSO's "dominance of the world diamond market".

Not that it shows. Last year set another record for worldwide diamond sales, which rose 7 per cent to \$4.83bn. Prices have also been rising, despite Russia. De Beers managed a 3 per cent rise on average in July.

Is the CSO a bad thing? The European Commission appears to be able to live with it even if the Americans cannot. The truth is, however, that its pariah breach seems to have done De Beers little harm. It might even persuade the company to step up its marketing efforts. Spurred by the cessation of hostilities in the Middle East, the company mounted its first advertising campaign in the Gulf earlier this year, while the Pacific Rim represents a vast and as yet under-exploited potential market. It may be that a dose of free market competition from the Russians would do everyone some good.

## Malaysia on course to realise a dream with millionth Proton car

Stephen Vines  
Singapore

Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's dream of creating a world-class industry took a step forward yesterday when he presided over a ceremony marking the production of the millionth Proton car.

The landmark event came after 11 years of manufacture and was celebrated as something of a national achievement. Proton has ambitious plans to export 40 per cent of its output.

At present, however, only the British market has shown real enthusiasm for the low-priced, high-specification Proton range, which is based on models developed by its Japanese partner, the Mitsubishi Motor Corporation.

In October Proton made a large investment in improving its technology by spending £51m to acquire the Lotus Group which makes sports cars but also gives Proton access to engine and transmission technology which it has been buying in from Japan.

The relationship between the state-controlled company which owns Proton, and its Japanese partner has been far from smooth. At one point Mitsubishi executives were so exasperated by the local management that they virtually took control of the whole project despite the fact that it was supposed to be a Malaysian flag-waving exercise.

Relations have since improved but there is lingering resentment in Malaysia about the Japanese company's reluctance to transfer technology. This was particularly disillusioning for the prime minister



Into an elite club: Proton joins some of the other famous models to have rolled a million on the production line (clockwise from top: the Proton, Mini, Morris-Minor, VW Beetle)

who was then advocating a "Look East" policy to learn from Japan rather than the West.

Dr Mahathir is, to put it mildly, a car enthusiast. He steam-rollered the plan to establish the Proton company to create Malaysia's national car programme, against considerable scepticism from the motor industry.

The first Proton Sagas were indeed little more than locally assembled Mitsubishi models but local content has increased

significantly and a higher level of local design has been incorporated in more recent models.

However, the development of Proton has taken a heavy toll on the rest of the Malaysian car industry because it enjoys a preferential customs duties regime, making Proton far cheaper than rival locally assembled cars.

A second national car programme has been launched to produce compact models. This too poses a threat to other parts of the local industry.

Proton announced yesterday that it plans to turn out 2 million cars in five years' time.

However, next year the tariffs on other models will have to be reduced if Malaysia is to comply with international trade agreements.

This means that Proton will need to reduce costs if it intends to maintain its policy of competing on price. Dr Mahathir called on Mitsubishi to reduce the cost of components and other supplies to help in this objective.

Proton announced yesterday that it plans to turn out 2 million cars in five years' time.

Annual production will be increased from 180,000 to 230,000 by the end of next year.

The national car programmes were seen by the government as part of a strategy to upgrade Malaysian industry.

Dr Mahathir said that they had demonstrated their ability in this respect because their output demonstrated that Malaysian workers were able to produce cars comparable in quality to those sold in demanding markets such as the United Kingdom.

## Bumper £10bn new issues for London market

Magnus Grimond

Last year saw a bumper £10.12bn of new issues on the London stock market, but this year could be trickier, according to a survey published yesterday. KPMG Corporate Finance is forecasting that there will be a rush of companies hoping to float in the next three months to beat the uncertainty caused by the general election.

Thereafter the flood is likely to be temporarily stanchied by the political uncertainty surrounding the poll, while valuations could be hit by a correction on Wall Street, the accountants warn.

Last year's figure compares with just £2.61bn in 1995, but just failed to beat the record £10.14bn achieved in 1994. In all there were 119 new issues in 1996, up from 86 the previous year, but little more than half the 218 in 1994.

KPMG's Neil Austin says the rot set in in the autumn. "I think things had been simmering for a while and the trigger was the fall in the US market, which caused three floats to be pulled. If things had been going well, that wouldn't have had the same effect."

Pub group Discovery Inns, Wise Speke, the stockbrokers and the self-off of certain engineering businesses from Morgan Crucible all announced the cancellation or postponement of flotation plans during December.

Separately, Britain's buy-out market reached a record £7.5bn in 1996, up 39 per cent from last year, according to a study released on Monday.

then turned to uncertainty, causing people to become more choosy.

But Mr Austin said the conditions remained ripe for the market. Companies would want to get in before the election, which has to be called before the summer. Also, institutions' cash piles have been boosted by recent takeovers. And the growth rates of the smaller companies which dominate the new issues market will look attractive against lower rates from larger companies.

There is then likely to be a hiatus before the summer, with stronger activity picking up in the autumn, he forecasts, fuelled by the good economic outlook in the UK.

Overseas factors, particularly the level of the US market, could hit valuations, but should not result in issues being pulled, he expects.

The average value of floatations shot up to £85m from £30m last year, led by the likes of Orange, the mobile telephone group, British Energy, the nuclear generating group, and Railtrack, owner of Britain's railway tracks.

Separately, the Centre of Management Buy-Out Research said that buy-outs and buy-ins hit a record £7.5bn during 1996, some £51m more than in the previous record year of 1989. The latest figure is 39 per cent up on the 1995 buy-out market.

Separately, Britain's buy-out market reached a record £7.5bn in 1996, up 39 per cent from last year, according to a study released on Monday.

Nic Cicutti

Plans by Bupa, the healthcare provider, to grab a slice of the £300m health insurance market in the Republic of Ireland could be dealt a critical blow by the Irish Government, which claims its schemes fall foul of the law.

The refusal of the Republic's Department of Health, which regulates the market, to authorise Bupa's launch on New Year's Day would deal a severe blow to the insurer's bid to expand at a time of difficult trading conditions in the UK.

Bupa currently has a 45 per cent share of the private health insurance market in the UK, worth about £1bn in premium income each year. Its market share has declined steadily from a high point of about 70 per cent over 15 years ago.

The row in Ireland concerns UK insurer's plans to mount an assault on the near-monopoly enjoyed until recently by the Voluntary Health Insurance Board (VHI), which is part-owned by the Irish state.

VHI policies cover 1.4 million people, almost 40 per cent of the total population, compared to just 11 per cent of UK residents with similar cover.

The policies are structured so that one can buy varying levels of cover, with the vast majority of people choosing an option which allows them some sort of care in a private hospital, or private care in the state system.

A recent Health Insurance Act allows competition to VHI, as long as little groups pay the same premiums for their cover.

The aim is not to allow "cherry-picking" of healthy policyholders, leaving the rest to pay more.

Bupa's plan competes with VHI by offering a very basic minimum insurance cover. Its more popular options pay cash to people needing hospital treatment rather than paying for it on their behalf. Bupa believes this allows it to avoid the Health Insurance Act. These options are age-related.

But a Department of Health statement said: "The effect of such a package may be to contravene the definition of a health insurance contract, as set out in the Act."

Tony McSweeney, sales and marketing director at VHI, said: "We welcome competition. But we have obtained legal opinion that Bupa's plans are not lawful as they stand."

He added that VHI reserved the right to take legal action in a bid to block Bupa if the Government gives the schemes its go-ahead.

## Carlton and CableTel to seek licences to operate digital terrestrial TV services

Matthew Horsman  
Media Editor

Carlton Communications, Michael Green's media group, and International CableTel, the cable operator, plan to bid for licences to operate digital terrestrial television services. The Independent has learned.

The two media companies are in talks with programmers, including US-controlled Flextech, the pay-TV packager, to reach preliminary carriage agreements prior to the 31 January deadline for DTT applications.

The programming talks,

which are at an early stage, could see Flextech's joint venture channels with the BBC made exclusively to either Carlton or CableTel, although Flextech is believed to have reserved the right to offer its channels for broadcast on other digital platforms.

It is understood that at least four channels are being offered by Flextech/BBC - Horizons, Showcase, Style and One-TV, the pop music channel, at a suggested cost of 75p each per subscriber. If either Carlton or CableTel want an additional channel, possible Arenal-Learning, another joint venture

with the BBC, the price would drop to 68p.

Flextech is understood to be prepared to strike a similar deal for satellite broadcasters, and has held preliminary talks with BSkyB, the satellite pay-TV giant, about offering the channels for satellite distribution.

Flextech and the BBC are believed to be open to an exclusive DTT and digital cable distribution deal, but the price per subscriber would have to be much higher, it is understood.

Flextech may also seek a deal to distribute two US channels on DTT in league with Universal and Warner, the

Hollywood studios. That possibility is being discussed by Flextech's parent, US cable giant AOL and Time-Warner, in New York.

Meanwhile, it emerged that the BBC and Flextech, which plan to launch as many as eight pay-TV channels together, are considering a film channel based on the BBC's library of quality made-for-TV films.

International CableTel, which

owns the transmission company NTL, is understood to be attracted by the prospects for supplying transmission services, and is also expected to bid for the three available commercial multiplexes.

Carlton and CableTel are to seek licences to operate digital terrestrial TV services.

Second in the league table is Lazard Brothers which benefited from its expertise in hostile bids. The Lazard team advised Granada on its £3.6bn hostile takeover of Forte and Rentokil on its £1.1bn bid for BET.

SBC Warburg, third in the table, was one of the beneficiaries of the £40m dished out by Forte in its desperate, but failed, attempt to grab Granada's grasp. The bank retained its position in the table despite a wave of defections after the merger between Swiss Bank Corporation and Warburg's last year.

As business boomed during the year, fuelled in part by a race to merge ahead of the general election, so did the hiring spree and compensation packages offer.

Merrill Lynch, the US financial firm, hired Guy Dawson from Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and as a result was catapulted into the Acquisitions Monthly top 10.

Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, in contrast, slid from eighth to 14th.

Bill Harrison was tempted to BZW, the investment banking arm of Barclays, from Robert

Fleming, on a pay deal worth close to £6.0m over five years.

George Magan, the veteran corporate financier, sold his business, Hambro Magan, to NatWest Markets in a deal which was rumoured to have created as many as 100 millionaires.

In the race to find mergers

and acquisitions experts, many professionals were offered guaranteed bonuses because they were hired during the financial year and not, as is more traditional, at year-end once their bonuses have been paid out.

### Top 10 M&A advisers

Adviser	Value £m
Baring Brothers (1)	11,789
Lazard Brothers (2)	11,096
SBC Warburg (3)	10,320
Schroders (7)	9,626
NM Rothschild (	



## business

# Someone you've not heard of cleans up the opposition

**Tom Stevenson** on James Dyson and the success of his revolutionary vacuum cleaner

James Dyson may be the most successful businessman you've never heard of, but his anonymity is likely to be short-lived. An award-winning designer, the revolutionary vacuum cleaner he launched only three years ago is taking Britain by storm and threatening to make Dyson a household name as Hoover itself.

He has looked in the eye on many occasions, faced down the wrath of the giant corporations that dominate the electrical appliance industry and which ridiculed his invention, fought off international conspiracies to plagiarise his designs, and come out on top.

With not a shred of assistance from the venture capitalists you might have thought were set up to fund just his sort of business, James Dyson has built up a company turning over £100m a year and tripling in size every 12 months.

And because of the brick wall he came up against in funding his crazy dream, he owns the lot. A former Royal College of Art student, he is the sole beneficiary of a company with ambitions to dominate the household appliances market in the UK and, who knows, around the world.

The Dual Cyclone vacuum cleaner is not Mr Dyson's first familiar invention. He was behind the odd-looking ball-barrow that for a while dominated



That Mr Dyson's machine is so much better than its rivals is proved by the chart below, showing how it has come from nowhere to dominate its mar-

tions. The principle is simple. By filtering dust in a funnel of air spinning at up to 900 miles per hour, Mr Dyson has dispensed with the paper bags that other cleaners use to catch the dirt, but which clog up in a matter of minutes. It is estimated that a traditional cleaner loses half its suction after cleaning just one room - the Dyson remains 100 per cent efficient indefinitely.

The most remarkable thing about the Dual Cyclone, however, is not its technology but the fact that it exists at all, given the decade long struggle Mr Dyson had to raise the funds he needed to bring it to market. Having sunk £4.5m of his own

money into the project, largely earned from overseas licensing of his patented design, the last film to bring the Dual Cyclone to market should have been a stink. It proved impossible, however, to raise this relatively modest sum in the private equity markets.

"You're just a designer, they said; get a professional manager from the industry and we'll back you," Mr Dyson ruefully recalls. "But I thought: this is my show and I'm going to run it." Only a believer at Lloyds Bank, who overthrew an original refusal to lend, allowed the cleaner to reach the shops at all.

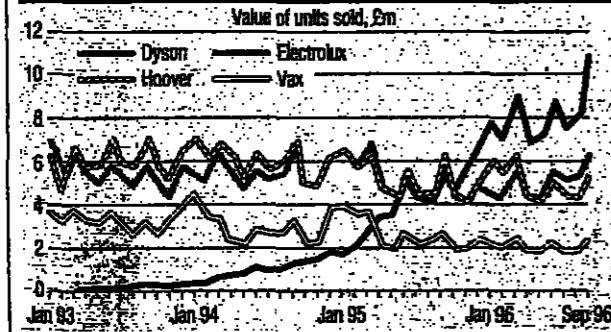
"It's clear they were not backing me partly because I was a designer but also because they are not interested in backing new technology," says Dyson. "Of course I'm eternally grateful to people for not giving me any money because now I own 100 per cent of the business."

The growth of that business has been prodigious. Launched in March 1993, sales reached £3m in the first year, £10m the following year, quadrupled to £40m in 1995, from which Dyson netted an £8m profit, and are forecast to reach a staggering £100m this year.

As the chart shows, during that time Dyson has left its competitors standing. Partly thanks to its £199 price tag the Dyson dominates the market by value. In unit terms too it is poised to overtake Electrolux.

The challenge for the company now is to manage this exponential growth without becoming just the sort of complacent, bloated multinational it has had to fight along the way. For now the art student ethos lives on and Dyson refuses to allow anyone to wear a suit to work: "People use them as a shield. They think 'everything I say will carry weight because I'm wearing a suit and therefore I'm a serious businessman. I want people to behave like human beings."

## Cleaning up



## Foreign Exchange Rates

Sterling		Dollar			D-Mark	
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.6002	1.19	1.39-38	1.0000	2.24	2.24
Canada	2.3202	54.49	54.15-56	1.3892	24.23	24.23
Germany	2.8201	69.61	70.23-73	1.5567	30.23	30.37
Japan	2.8271	217.98	216.50-52	2.4245	86.81	87.00
ECU	1.3023	21.18	21.00-02	1.2002	13.14	14.45-47
Belgium	5.4200	15.70	15.70-72	5.4200	7.5	20.7
Netherlands	2.8225	22.07-09	22.07-09	2.2426	2.24	2.24
Sweden	1.6227	62.74	62.74-74	1.6227	16.58	16.58
Denmark	1.6227	22.07-09	22.07-09	1.6227	16.58	16.58
Switzerland	2.2225	85.76	85.76-88	1.3805	40.37	40.37
Hong Kong	3.0705	5.42	5.42-54	2.7705	14.25	14.25
Malaysia	4.2723	0.4	0.4-0.4	2.5277	27.30	28.85
New Zealand	2.3355	64.71	64.71-68	1.4561	54.56	57.99
Saudi Arabia	2.3350	0.0	0.0-0.0	2.3503	24.14	24.14
Singapore	2.3353	0.0	0.0-0.0	2.3357	24.28	70.05

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	0.0269	105.338	Nigeria	133.903	72.000
Austria	1.7656	1.05338	Ormen	0.8509	0.3850
Brazil	1.7656	1.05338	Pakistan	67.2631	4.07785
Canada	1.4023	1.05338	Portugal	1.4527	0.74549
Egypt	5.7536	3.4051	Russia	0.5222	0.5222
Finland	7.2700	1.05338	Russia	0.5222	0.5222
Greece	4.0525	2.5227	Russia	0.5222	0.5222
Iceland	6.7120	3.5227	Russia	0.5222	0.5222
Kuwait	0.5077	1.3003	UAE	6.2093	3.6730

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate.

Rate quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate.

Dollar rates quoted as reciprocal.

For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033.

Call cost 50p per minute (day rate) 45p other times.

## Interest Rates

Country	Spr	yield %	10yr	yield %	10yr	yield %	10yr	yield %
UK	6.00%	2.50%	7.14%	6.00%	2.50%	7.14%	6.00%	2.50%
France	3.25%	3.25%	5.00%	3.25%	3.25%	5.00%	3.25%	3.25%
Germany	2.8201	69.61	203.193	2.8201	69.61	203.193	2.8201	69.61
Japan	2.8271	217.98	216.50-52	2.8271	217.98	216.50-52	2.8271	217.98
ECU	1.3023	21.18	21.00-02	1.3023	21.18	21.00-02	1.3023	21.18
Belgium	5.4200	15.70	15.70-72	5.4200	15.70	15.70-72	5.4200	15.70
Netherlands	2.8225	22.07-09	22.07-09	2.8225	22.07-09	22.07-09	2.8225	22.07-09
Sweden	1.6227	22.07-09	22.07-09	1.6227	22.07-09	22.07-09	1.6227	22.07-09
Denmark	1.6227	22.07-09	22.07-09	1.6227	22.07-09	22.07-09	1.6227	22.07-09
Switzerland	2.2225	85.76	85.76-88	1.3805	40.37	40.37	1.3805	40.37
Hong Kong	3.0705	5.42	5.42-54	2.7705	14.25	14.25	2.7705	14.25
Malaysia	4.2723	0.4	0.4-0.4	2.5277	27.30	28.85	2.5277	27.30
New Zealand	2.3355	64.71	64.71-68	1.4561	54.56	57.99	1.4561	54.56
Saudi Arabia	2.3350	0.0	0.0-0.0	2.3503	24.14	24.14	2.3503	24.14
Singapore	2.3353	0.0	0.0-0.0	2.3357	24.28	70.05	2.3357	24.28

Yield calculated on local basis.

Yield based on 100% of par value.

Yield based on 100%



# Germany did not get anywhere near the credit they deserved given that it was probably their weakest squad for years

With the year drawing to a close, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the year's major football event. Everyone, it seems, has had their say on England's performance, but in all the fuss over the achievement of Terry Venables' team in so narrowly failing to reach the final, what about the winners?

To my mind Germany did not get anywhere near the credit they deserved, given the fact that it was probably the weakest squad they have produced for years. Added to which, Bert Vogts, the German coach, had to carry a horrendous injury crisis even before they arrived here.

Yes, *Euro 96* was a great spectacle, and our boys did superbly, but just as all the flag-waving was finished and Trafalgar Square eventually emptied, so the old Lufthansa

Tri-star was once again touching down with the spoils safely locked aboard.

Nevertheless, lucky or not, the Germans did it again. As Gary Player said: "The more I practise the luckier I get." And from all I hear, they do love to practise. Obviously you can't believe everything you hear, but on this occasion, my source is impeccable.

Colin Bell – not be of Main Road fame – was an apprentice and then a professional footballer who never quite made the grade at Leicester City. In 1982, when he was 21, and anxious to play football anywhere, he was released on a free transfer.

Anywhere just happened to be Germany and he eventually finished up at Koblenz, who were then a lower division outfit. Eight

years on and all of 30 years old, he became player-manager at Koblenz. Since then he has taken them through the lower leagues to the German Second Division and established himself as one of the brightest young managers working there.

The eight years in question he has also had to get himself qualified to work as a manager. What is the alternative to qualification in Germany? There isn't one, unless you are Kaiser Franz. Apparently, Beckenbauer's honorary exception was enthusiastically greeted by German coaches. They reckoned he still had a lot to offer and, they argue, he did well on and won the World Cup.

Colin Bell would argue that the management and coaching system helped him, and helped the players to pocket yet another World Cup trophy.



HOWARD WILKINSON

"Teutonic thoroughness" is no cliché as far as aspiring managers are concerned. The "B" license involves a three-week course and allows you to coach up to the German Fourth Division. Acquiring an "A" license takes a little longer; mind you it does entitle you to manage up to the lofty heights of the *Zweite Liga* (Second Di-

sion), provided you have had at least two years' practical experience after acquiring your "B" license.

Then comes the "C" license. This must come at the end of a course lasting at least 10 or 12 weeks, mustn't it? Brace yourselves: to earn the licence you must complete a seven-month full-time course at the Sports University in Cologne. Students are allowed back to their clubs at weekends and there is also a seven-week attachment to a *Bundesliga* club.

But does it all matter, all this theory and education? Historical facts are not theory, they argue. Germany are the most successful international country in Europe, if not the world.

All of which is very different to our so-called "professionalism".

Germany recognises the absolute vi-

tal necessity to get it right between the ages of eight and 21. If we are to capitalise on the current boom here, then we must do likewise. Anybody can learn to coach, but coaching of our most valuable assets should not be available to just anybody. We wouldn't let it happen at school, would we?

Is there a secret to Germany's success? Is it a mystery known only to them? Have the Norwegians and the Dutch infiltrated and cracked information they shouldn't be privy to?

Apparently not. The German football nation, perhaps the German sporting nation, has a "coaching mentality", and that by definition means a practising mentality. Excellence is a fact not a figment of misinformed thinking.

The bigger the club, the more coaches they employ. Bayern Mu-

nich, for instance, would seek to employ more manager's licence holders than anyone else. They want their players at all ages and all levels to have the best available. Players from Kinder to Klinsmann view coaches as professionals due professional respect. As a percentage of the population, Germany has probably double the amount of players registered that we have. The clubs are the focal point of learning and teaching.

Colin Bell is convinced the key factor in Germany's continued success is the quality and thoroughness of the coaches privileged to work under licence. The players get the best coaches and the best practice and they reckon the more they practise the luckier they get. That's their story, anyway, and they are sticking to it.

## Men of letters court chance to pool their wits

Greg Wood sees darts continue its emergence from the gloom of the late Eighties in the emotional atmosphere of an Essex night-club



Photograph: Peter Jay

It was shortly after 1.00pm and Dennis "The Menace" Priestley was ready to make his entrance into the Circus Tavern for the first match of the day in the WDC World Darts Championship, but something was not quite right. Despite the best endeavours of several smoke machines, not to mention the substantial puffing majority in the audience, you could still see the board, so a man with a mobile fog-generator – who was clearly being paid by the cough – was dispatched to add a final cloud or three. By the time he had finished, visibility was down to six inches. At least, somewhere to the left of the acrid fogbank, the stage was set, for darts style.

And that, it must be said, is the only style worth bothering with. In each of the four years since the WDC breakaway, the presentation at the Purfleet venue has grown a little more garish, but it is none the worse for that. When darts fell into a late-80s slump even more drastic than the one in the housing market, the big names felt a new ruling body was the only answer,

and now their decision appears to be paying off.

After lagging behind the prize-money on offer in the other world championship, the Embassy event at Frimley Green, the WDC tournament now offers £45,000 to the winner, the largest prize in darts. The formula – gladiatorial entrances, young women in swimsuits, bright lights and thumping disco beats – might not appeal to the old-timers in the snug of the Ferret and Trouser-Leg, but darts, you feel, is finally on the way back.

And it has much to offer, not least a degree of audience participation which few other sports would encourage in these nervous times. Spectators are encouraged to line the route to the stage, exchanging handshakes and backslaps with their favourites, while the kids pack-

er up in the hope of a kiss, cheerfully unaware that, if they breathe at the wrong moment, it will probably leave them both drunk and choking. It is rather difficult to imagine Nick Faldo indulging in similar pleasantries on the first tee at St Andrews.

Priestley's route yesterday was relatively trouble-free, but was it the crush when Eric Bristow appeared the previous evening that it seemed odds against him even making it to the oche. Lucky for him, the cynics would have said beforehand, such as has been Bristow's decline from the mid-80s heyday when he was all but unbeatable and one of the best-known faces in Britain. Yet despite setting out as a 150-1 chance to win the tournament, "Crafty Cockney" swept past Bob Anderson, the

No 3 seed, finishing the final leg from 276 with four straight treble-20s and double 18. It was as if he had never been away, and at the final double, the Tavern descended into ecstatic bedlam.

But as even Bristow later admitted, "you can't have two world championships in any sport", and indeed, the plague of acronyms which has infested darts as thoroughly as it has boxing may at last be responding to treatment. The British Darts Organisation, which banned the renegade players from all its "open" events four years ago, is on the receiving end of a World Darts Council with alleging restraint of trade which, after a defeat of almost two years, will finally reach a court in June. Close observers of darts politics feel that a reconciliation between the two or-

ganisations is as inevitable as it is overdue. What is certain, though, is that no matter how the sport arranges itself in the coming months, Priestley, who made impressively short work of Steve Brown yesterday, and Phil Taylor, who is seen to meet in Sunday's final, are the finest two players in the world, and have been throughout the 90s. Their rivalry, which must be among the most enduring in any sport, is a friendly one, but, there is an added edge this year, as Taylor attempts to equal Bristow's record of five world titles.

"If he plays very well and beats me, and I don't play really badly, then I'm happy, and I sure it's the same for him," Priestley says. "It's a matter of putting pressure on at the right time. You can score well and

then miss a double and then suddenly he'll get a 156 out-shot and you're left regretting it all. Last year in the final I played excellent darts and it wasn't enough, but maybe if we get there this year, the pressure of going for three in a row will get him a little."

But even another classic like their match 12 months ago will not shift the prejudice which still persists in some areas of the British sporting audience. "There are obviously some people who look at darts and see cheap caps," Priestley says, "but if you go to America or Australia it doesn't have that stigma, and you find that there are lawyers and doctors playing."

Whether the doctors would approve of the smoke machines, of course, is another matter entirely.

### SPORTING DIGEST

North 2.000; 7. Medway 0. Swindon 12. NORTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE: Whitley 4

#### Rugby League

St Helens will have a pitch inspection today to decide whether the New Year's Day Novice Challenge second leg against Widnes will go ahead. The 10,000 tickets for England's World Cup qualifier with Italy on 12 February will go on sale on Thursday from 9am for telephone callers only via the Wembley box office. No tickets are available for people who travel in person to Wembley.

The Salford forwards Cliff Eccles and Mark Lee have undergone elbow operations and Lee has had to give up the start of the new Super League season in mid-March.

St Helens' Chris Wyles has been ruled out of the Novice Challenge with a knee injury.

The Italian club Parma have appointed Nevio Scala, the former Parma coach, as their new coach until June 2000, replacing Giovanni Galeone, who has moved to the Italian national team.

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## sport

Professionalism hit British rugby this year, bringing internecine warfare, a Test epidemic and an invasion of foreign players. **Chris Hewett** says the game must move forward in 1997 to survive

# Goose that laid the powder keg

**R**ugby's golden goose has proved an elusive creature in 1996, a survival specialist with an instinct for self-preservation far more acute than anything displayed by Gerald Davies or David Campese in their heydays. It has been hunted relentlessly by of-solace committee men, cheque book-wielding business barons and avuncular players who appear to have studied economics under Walter Mitty. Formidable enemies indeed, yet the goose continues to draw breath.

But for how much longer? It is astonishing that domestic rugby still bask in the warm glow of an unprecedented boom in popularity given the best efforts of those at the summit of the British game – and the English one in particular – to dash it to smithereens on the twin altars of petty power-mongering and grotesque greed.

Even now, England's senior clubs are girding their loins for a fierce argument with the Rugby Football Union over the Courage League structure – not next season's structure, mark you, but this season's. The First Division protectionists want a 12-team top flight with two relegation slots while the governing body is pushing a 10-team arrangement under which no fewer than four clubs would wave good-bye to their precious elite status.

When the rival battalions finally strike a formal deal on the financial and broadcasting disputes that have dominated the headlines for 12 long months – the so-called negotiations from both sides hope to settle in January, although no one is prepared to say which January – the relegation issue will still be there, bubbling away underneath a facade of good fellowship and reconciliation.

Yet the real threat to rugby's development as a major spectator sport is overkill on the international stage. This is not a little local difficulty, like the RFU-Epruc (English Professional Rugby Union Clubs) rumpus in England, but a worldwide epidemic. So many test matches are scheduled to be played in 1997 that there is a serious danger of reducing to nothing the sense of occasion that has always been the single most important foundation stone of the sport's mass appeal.

Ridiculously, the International Board has sanctioned no fewer than 46 full Tests involving the traditional Big Eight nations – the four home countries, France, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia – during the coming calendar year, and that number is likely to leave 50 behind once each country has finalised its plans. It amounts to a major Test

**Global village culture is much in evidence at club level, as Rowell is finding to his cost**

short of full houses at the Arms Park for both the Test with the Aussies – the game in which the home-grown hero Jonathan Davies returned to international colours – and the match against South Africa, one of the two most marketable outfits on the planet.

Quite how many pitch up at Cardiff for next week's match with the United States is anyone's guess but few are likely to be knocked unconscious in the box office frenzy.

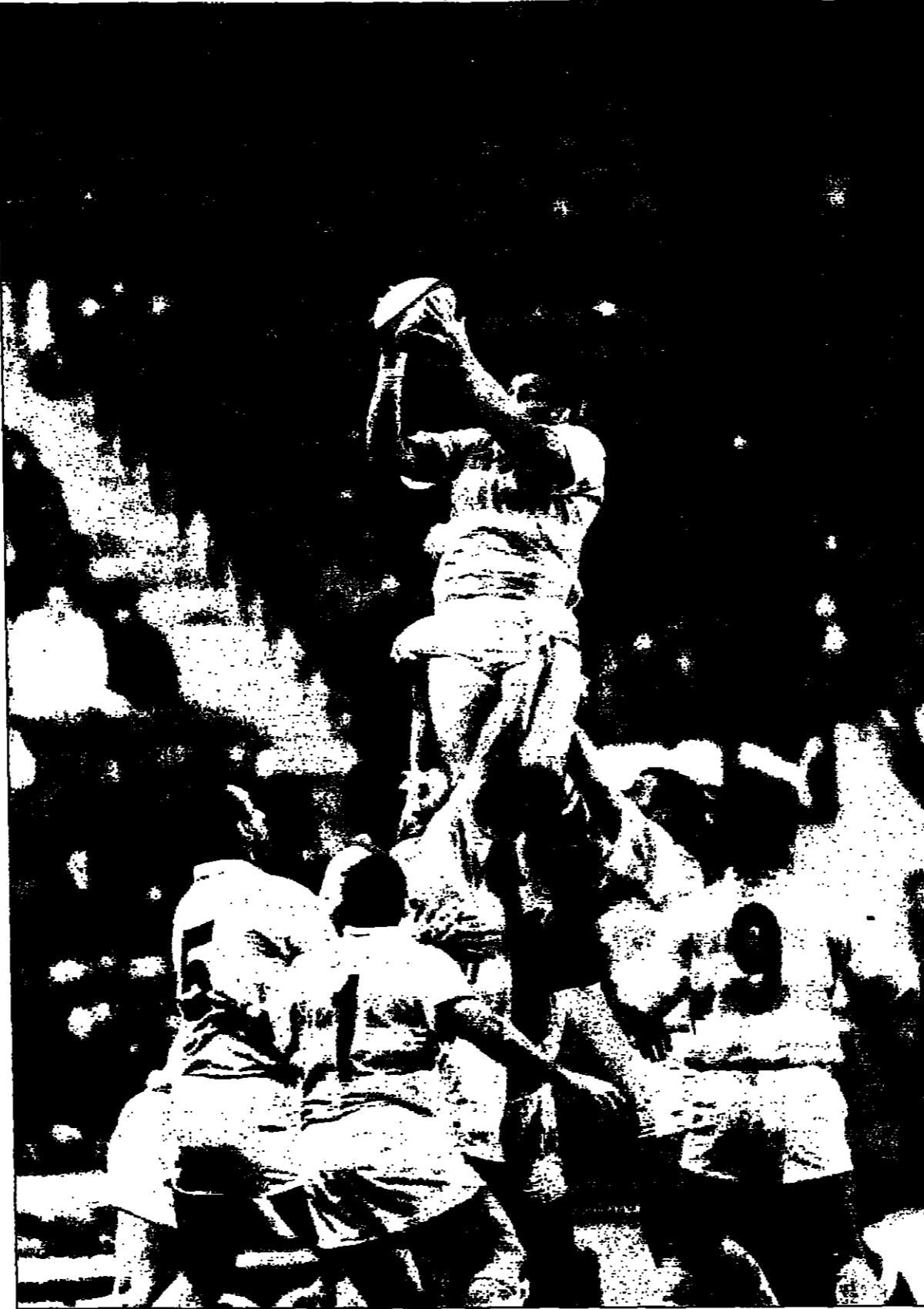
Global village culture is much in evidence at club level, too, as Rowell is finding to his cost as he searches high and low for English-qualified talent.

It is a well-documented fact that the outside-half cupboard is virtually bare: of the 12 first-choice stand-offs in the First Division, only five are available for red rose selection (and one of those, Mike Catt of Bath, is a South African by birth). Given that Leicester and Harlequins are about to draft in Joel Stransky, a Springbok, and Thierry Lacroix, a Frenchman, respectively, the options will soon decrease by another 40 per cent.

Further examination reveals that in at least two other key positions, middle jumper and open-side flanker, the choice is very nearly as limited. On an average Courage League weekend, only 50 per cent or more of those performing in each position will be foreign imports.

It does not take an astrophysicist to work out that the situation cannot be allowed to continue unchecked, and if the new management company about to take over the day-to-day running of senior club rugby in England has any sense at all, it will make this issue its No 1 priority.

For all that, there are encouraging signs that the club



Empty seats at Twickenham, during England's Test against Argentina earlier this month, suggest the dangers of overkill for spectators are already with us in the expansion of international competition

Photograph: David Ashdown

game here is flourishing under the demands of professionalism. Rugby is more popular in London and the Midlands than ever before – just look at the crowds at The Stoop, Loftus Road, Welford Road and Franklin's Gardens – while Newcastle, bankrolled by Sir John Hall but made flesh with impressive single-mindedness by Rob Andrew, are emerging as a real power in the land.

With Sale also cutting plenty of ice on the other side of the Pennines, the northern out-

look is brighter than many feared when salary packets first replaced boot money.

As in all business ventures, quality control is of paramount importance: for instance, the Heineken European Cup, the wild success story of the season, requires careful nurturing while, conversely, the almost unimaginably pointless Anglo-Welsh tournament deserves a thorough soaking with weedkiller.

If that proves beyond the badged and blazered buffers of the four home unions, sack the load of them and headhunt a couple of old All Blacks to run the show. If we are going to take up residence in the global village, let's make it work for us all, so get rid of it.

This has been a bitterly frus-

trating year of wasted opportunities, undermined by bad faith and endless procrastination. In 1997 British rugby needs to break the logjam with sharp minds, quick wits and above all, an injection of energy.

If that proves beyond the badged and blazered buffers of the four home unions, sack the load of them and headhunt a couple of old All Blacks to run the show. If we are going to take up residence in the global village, let's make it work for us all, so get rid of it.

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## Years of outsiders

### The coach

**BOB DWYER** – Australian World Cup-winning coach, now at league-leaders Leicester.

"I've spent just half the season in English rugby but I believe the biggest problem is that the demands on players in the professional era are nowhere near big enough. If you're being paid £70,000 for a season's performances for England, you should be in tip-top shape, but it strikes me that some of those at the most lucrative end of the game are well short of that. My other concern is that people here misunderstand how good a player needs to be to perform effectively at Test level; some of the current English-based players are not within cooee, as we say back home. The sound assessment of talent is absolutely essential in the development of a strong national side, as is mental and physical conditioning. If you get that right, you will go a long way because everything else is here on your doorstep – when I was a young coach, England was a cradle of physical education. You have heaps of information at your fingertips, but you really have to improve the application of that information."

### The fan

**MARTIN GOULD** – Wasps supporter.

"My main concerns about the game in England are twofold; that the influx of foreign players while very exciting for the supporters, is beginning to have a negative effect on the development of our own youngsters and that the paying spectator is taking far too much of a bidding in the pocket."

"On the flip side, my own club must shoulder a share of the blame with everyone – we have two Scots in our second row, a Western Samoan and a Canadian in our back division. At the start of the season, Alex King couldn't get a game at outside-half because Gareth Rees had been brought in. Had it not been for early injuries, Alex might not be in the England squad now. The obsession with expensive imports is dangerous and limits will have to be imposed. From the supporter's point of view, £15 at the turnstiles is hitting us hard. Soccer fans may be used to paying that sort of money but the sudden leap in prices to finance players' inflated wage bills really does stick in the craw."

### The player

**JON CALLARD** – Bath and England full-back.

"The obvious source of discomfort at the way our game is going is the influx of foreign talent. I am perfectly aware of its short-term value – players like Michael Lynagh, Joel Stransky and Ingo Jagamala and the rest can only raise the profile of domestic rugby and that brings new supporters through the turnstiles, all well and good."

"But in the long term, what good will do us as a rugby-playing nation? Very little, I'm afraid. There is an awful lot of home-grown talent but there that needs to be developed and exposure at the top level is the key element in that. It would be self-defeating if good young players were forced to perform at a lower level – or give up the game altogether – because their progress was being blocked by big names from overseas."

"On another note, I would like to see us experiment with two referees as a means of cracking down on offences like offside and killing the ball. It is still too easy for one side to play entirely negatively and get away with it."

### The administrator

**MIKE SMITH** – chief executive, Saracens.

"The first thing we have to do to ensure our future is forget our immediate past. We have to put last year's in-fighting behind us, encourage the personalities involved to draw a line under the conflict and get on with building up for the Five Nations and, in the longer term, the 1999 World Cup."

"The public perception of rugby was sky high until this season, and I think the difficulties between the clubs and the Rugby Football Union has affected gates both at domestic and international level. We cannot allow that situation to continue."

"Unfortunately, the RFU and the clubs have been trying to run two separate businesses with the same raw materials in terms of players. Both sides need to maximise their earning potential but instead of agreeing a common approach, there has been division. We are now in the world of entertainment and many clubs, Saracens included, have taken that on board by improving facilities for players and supporters alike. It is all about developing the product and for that to happen, everyone must pull in the same direction."

# What a gamble, what a lottery, what a farce!



ALAN WATKINS

The last four months have seen the biggest changes in rugby I have known. Some of them have been both exciting and overdue: others neither. But what has become apparent with every Saturday afternoon is that not only the quality but the very nature of the game depends on the referee. It is his interpretation of the laws as they are called in England – the rules, almost everywhere else – which determines what happens on the field.

So far, so obvious, you may say dismissively. But it is not obvious at all when you come to think about it. This football is a simple game, which is why it is so popular, whose only complicated area is the application of the offside rule. Here the referee has two qualified linesmen

virtually to apply it on his behalf. Tennis is even simpler, where the only difficulty lies in judging whether the ball was inside, on or outside a white line. Here electronic devices have come to the aid of the umpires.

Cricket, to be sure, is more complicated. In a scholarship examination which I sat at 18 I had (in a question I chose voluntarily) to explain it to a foreigner. I was sorry I tried. But though the rules are complex, they are coherent and comprehensible. There are few areas of latitude: such as what is "unfair play". The principal difficulty is to establish what happened. Accordingly additional officials have been introduced to help the umpires.

Rugby is different. There is no agreement about what the rules mean or how they should be applied. Brian Moore would not have been sent off for raking or stamping if he had been playing for Auckland against Canterbury rather than for Richmond against Sale.

European, certainly British Isles, referees take a different view. They will not permit an attacking player to move a defending player with his boot in an attempt to get at the ball.

The most they are prepared to allow is a penalty to the attacking side. But this is frequently unjust.

Consider: a player is tackled but the tackler fails to "turn" him. The tackled player, by this time on the ground, legitimately tries to make the ball available to his own side.

Forwards pile in from both teams, in these circumstances, which we see

repeated every five minutes every Saturday, there cannot logically be a "right" or a "wrong" side of the ball. From the point of view of the tackled player's team, he is on the right side; from that of the tackler's team, on the wrong.

As I have said, the referee may award a penalty to the tackler's team. But he has, in theory anyway, an entirely different option. The tackled player has simply tried to make the ball available to his own team. The ball is on the ground. It is being contested by both packs. It is accordingly a ruck. The referee can blow up and award the put-in to the team who took the ball into the ruck, the tackled player's team: for it cannot be the other one.

If, however, the ball has failed to touch the deck, the ensuing mêlée counts as a maul, where, if the ball fails to emerge, the referee awards the put-in against the team adjudged to have taken the ball in.

What a gamble, what a lottery, what a farce! Is it any wonder that

experienced television commentators, sometimes former internationals themselves, are often at a loss to explain why a particular decision has been made, even though they are assisted by television in the commentary box?

A few weeks ago I was watching Bath play Harlequins at the Rec and standing behind Stuart Barnes, who was doing his stuff as a sumo marionette for Sky TV. A player was penalised for lying on the ground and not getting out of the way.

Barnes said, entirely justly, that he did not see what else the chap could do in the circumstances. If someone as experienced in the modern game as Barnes can be puzzled, what hope is there for the rest of us?

I could mention other matters: the toleration of the crooked feed; the modern English fashion for awarding ridiculous penalty tries which has now spread to Wales; the new ambivalence about what is and is not a dangerous tackle. But the real trouble remains with "over the top", "not releasing" and the rest of it. For a start I would, first, abolish the distinction between ruck and maul and, second, always award the put-in to the advancing side.

I apologise for the mysterious misspelling of Stratford Park in last week's column. I am now off to pay my annual pilgrimage to the grave of William Webb Ellis in Menton, and shall (DV) be back on Tuesday 21 January. A Happy New Year to all my readers.

## East women win seventh title

### Hockey

**BILL COLWELL**

East duly claimed their seventh Women's Under-21 Territorial title at the Milton Keynes National Stadium yesterday but not before they suffered a few shocks from an entertaining West side in their 2-2 draw.

When Kerry Moore scored East's second goal 10 minutes into the second half, after Sarah Marsh had given them a 1-0 interval lead, two goals seemed certain. But two goals from West in three minutes midway through the half ensured a tight finish, with a disengaged East desperately hanging on at the end.

For West, Anna Lambert

picked up a poor clearance from the East captain, Canterbury's Melanie Clewlow, to run 50 yards through the East defence to score a fine goal, and Jennifer Martin struck a sweetly timed penalty corner to equalise.

Careless defending by East gave West another couple of chances to snatch the game before the final whistle. The draw was enough to give West the overall win in the tournament – now into its 12th year – over South.

The Welsh international Louise Bevan scored in each half as South beat North, 2-0. Both goals came from follow-ups of two of South's 16 penalty-corner attempts. Midlands, last year's champions, came

## Panthers help Devils

### Ice hockey

Rejuvenated Nottingham Panthers prevented Newcastle Cobras from closing the gap on the Superleague leaders, Cardiff Devils, with a 9-5 win on Sunday.

Cobras, bidding to make up ground on Devils and second-placed Sheffield Steelers, took the lead in the first minute. But they were out of the game by the 40-minute mark, when they trailed 7-2. Marty Dallman's first hat-trick for Panthers was the main talking point, although the prolific Paul Adey weighed in with a treble himself.

The win made up for Saturday's disappointment as Nottingham were beaten for the first

## Steelers make stunning drive

### American football

The San Francisco 49ers shut out the Philadelphia Eagles 14-0 and the Pittsburgh Steelers steamrolled the Indianapolis Colts in the second half of what ended as a 42-14 rout in the NFL play-offs.

The 49ers' Steve Young ran for a touchdown and overcame a rib injury to throw for the other in the NFC wild-card game at 3Com Park on Sunday, while the Steelers' Jerome Bettis ran for 102 yards and two one-yard scores in the AFC wild-card game at Three Rivers Stadium.

The Steelers outplayed the Colts in Pittsburgh but only made sure of facing the New

England Patriots in next weekend's divisional play-offs with a 29-point second half. Indianapolis struggled in the first half, too, but the Steelers' starting quarterback Mike Tomczak threw two interceptions, one resulting in a 59-yard touchdown return by Eugene Daniel and the other leading to a TD.

Bettis's first scoring plunge and Kordell Stewart's two-point conversion pass in the third quarter gave Pittsburgh the lead for good, 21-14, after a 16-play, 91-yard march that devoured the first 9:30 of the second half. Bettis carried seven times for 38 yards on the drive.

"I don't know if I've seen a drive that took up that much time that was executed that well," the Steel-

## Pick of the Day

### The Rolling Stones' Rock and Roll Circus

10.50pm BBC2

A chance to see just why The Rolling Stones might once just have been "the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world". Certainly this footage from 1968, since suppressed by Mick Jagger, shows the Stones doing better than any of their guests (Jethro Tull, The Who and - on lordy - Taj Mahal), while, if you like this sort of thing, we get the sight of Eric Clapton, Keith Richard and Yoko Ono jamming together as "The Dirty Mac".



## Film of the Day

### Shadowlands

8.00pm BBC1 (not Scotland).

"The butler from *Remains of the Day* promoted to a don" was one wry observation of Sir Anthony Hopkins' performance as CS Lewis in Richard Attenborough's polished screen adaptation of William Nicholson's wonderful play. Sir Anthony, of course, was born to play frigid individuals shyly blossoming - and in this case the donnish Lewis slowly begins to thaw under the attention of American poet Joy Gresham, here played by Debra Winger.

# Today's television and radio

## BBC 1

7.00 News; Local News and Weather (24080731). \* 7.10 Joe 90 (7505580). 7.35 The Busy World of Richard Scarry (R) (S) (1627217). 8.00 News; Regional News and Weather (5065412). \* 8.10 Children's BBC: Barney. 8.15 Peter Pan and the Pirates. \* 8.35 The Legend of Prince Valiant. \* 9.00 News; Regional News and Weather (3625764). \* 9.05 Children's BBC: Incredible Games. 9.35 Sweet Valley High. 9.55 The Little Polar Bear. 10.00 Playspace. 10.20 William's Wish (Wishing Well). 10.30 The Snowball Express (Norman Tokan 1972 US). New York insurance clerk Dean Jones abandons the rat race and his uncle bequeaths him a run-down hotel in the Colorado Rockies. Dial 'D' for Disney (2387270). 12.05 The Muppets (4992126). 12.30 Wipeout (31851). 1.00 News; Weather (93143528). \* 1.12 Local News and Weather (82642122). 1.15 Neighbours (58612948). 1.35 The World's Strongest Man 1995 (5747509). 2.10 Problem Child (Dennis Dugan 1990 US). Small-town couple John Ritter and Amy Yasbeck are horrified to discover their newly adopted angelic-looking son (Michael Oliver) is actually an uncontrollable delinquent (7164596). \* 3.20 Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country (Nicholas Meyer 1991 US). The sixth and final big-screen sci-fi adventure featuring the crew of the original TV series sees Captain Kirk (William Shatner) put to trial for firing at a Klingon vessel during peace negotiations (S) (19094696). \* 5.05 Neighbours (S) (8970528). \* 5.30 News and Weather (349621). \* 5.45 Regional News Magazine (362832). 6.00 The World's Strongest Man (S) (49870). \* 7.00 Only Fools and Horses Selection Box. The sitcom bows out with Del-Boy, Rodney and Uncle Albert looking back over their 15-year run (S) (6344). \* 7.30 EastEnders. Nigel makes an important announcement, while Tiffany plays her cards close to her chest. But how close is that? (S) (238). \* 8.00 Shadowlands (Richard Attenborough 1993 UK). See Film of the Day (S) (83227367). \* 10.05 News; Regional News and Weather (469702). \* 10.25 The Adventures of Morecambe and Wise. Some of their funniest moments (R) (350528). \* 11.00 The End of the Year Show Angus Deayton presents an irreverent view of the year's events, with guests Julian Clary, David Baddiel, Lee Hurst and The Spice Girls (S) (202957). 12.05 Hogmanay Live. Carol Smillie and Gordon Kennedy join in the festivities at the Great Hall in Edinburgh Castle (S) (2362026). 1.00 Happy New Year. The Archbishop of Canterbury sends his greetings (S) (5043062). 1.05 The Carry on Girls (Gerald Thomas 1973 UK). Sid James persuades his local council to hold a beauty contest. Enter outraged feminists with sabotage in mind (3102807). \* 2.30 Weather (818281). To 2.55am.

## BBC 2

7.30 The Phil Silvers Show (R) (1626528). 7.55 James Cagney: Top of the World (R) (5022809). 8.45 **Angels with Dirty Faces** (Michael Curtiz 1938 US). Childhood friends James Cagney and Pat O'Brien grow up to become gangster and priest respectively (47082899). 10.20 Eisenstein in America (3735493). 11.45 The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures. Fossils and evolution, continued (S) (278528). \* 12.45 Clash of the Titans. The 1988 FA Cup final between Liverpool and Wimbledon (R) (S) (3821219). \* 1.25 **Reign Beyond the Horizon** (Adventure (Irwin Allen 1979 US). Michael Caine and Telly Savalas star in this sequel to the disaster movie as rival leaders on a salvage mission to locate the capsized passenger liner (28977493). \* 3.30 News (1671054). 3.35 London Today (1612535). 3.40 Carlton Times (5709293). 3.55 Body Heat Celebrity Special (S) (570503). \* 4.40 Home and Away Special (R) (S) (1276141). 5.10 After the News. News quiz (S) (7787509). 5.40 News; Weather (318257). \* 5.55 Your Shout (239702). 6.00 London Tonight (Followed by Weather) (870). \* 6.30 **Emmerdale**. Frank Tate is pushed too far (S) (1412). \* 7.30 **Taxi**. Second of these tacky programmes in which a camera is concealed in the back of a London cab. Welcome to the future of TV (306). \* 8.00 **The Bill**. Drug overdose grief (7832). \* 8.30 **Cuts**. Adapted by David Nobbs from Malcolm Bradbury's comic novel, this is satire - of media folk - of the cosiest order, and the sort of obvious casting that makes you wonder why anyone bothers with casting directors. Peter Davison is a mild-mannered lecturer-cum-obscure novelist who's asked to pen an epic drama serial by the power-crazed boss of an independent TV company (Timothy West) (S) (12870). \* 10.15 **The Bob Downe Special** The Australian comedian plus guests Ant and Dec, Anthony Newley and EastEnders Martine McCutcheon (853734). \* 11.15 **The Golden Child** (Michael Ritchie 1986 US). The sort of trip that seems Eddie Murphy's career earthworks. He plays a Los Angeles social worker who is reluctantly employed by wizened oriental sages to locate a mystical youth with the power to bring peace to mankind (S) (550986). \* 11.55 **New Year Bells**. Trevor McDonald joins Hogmanay revellers at Scotland's Scone Palace (925986). 12.05 **The Golden Child** (S) (938557). \* 1.10 **Topaz** (Alfred Hitchcock 1969 US). Hitch's 51st feature is a duller-than-dull spy yarn about Cuban rightists, French government agents and so forth. He'd clearly lost his touch at this stage. John Forsythe leads the cast (3328002). 1.30 **The Swiss Conspiracy** (Jack Arnold 1975 US). Derivative thriller starring David Janssen as a bank security expert (27333). To 5.00am.

## ITV/London

5.00 GMTV (7390141). 9.25 Santa Buggy (S) (4235412). 9.50 Step by Step (R) (S) (2293509). 10.20 News (381122). \* 10.25 London Today (318602). \* 10.30 **Reindeer to Snow River II** (Geoff Burrows 1988 US). Starring Tom Burlinson, Sigrid Thornton and Ben Denney (S) (60137561). 12.20 **Your Star** (6571275). 12.25 London Today (7921716). 12.30 **ITV Lunchtime News** (9223986). \* 12.35 London Today (9108677). \* 1.25 **Reign Beyond the Horizon** (Adventure (Irwin Allen 1979 US). Michael Caine and Telly Savalas star in this sequel to the disaster movie as rival leaders on a salvage mission to locate the capsized passenger liner (28977493). \* 3.30 News (1671054). 3.35 London Today (1612535). 3.40 Carlton Times (5709293). 3.55 Body Heat Celebrity Special (S) (570503). \* 4.40 Home and Away Special (R) (S) (1276141). 5.10 After the News. News quiz (S) (7787509). 5.40 News; Weather (318257). \* 5.55 Your Shout (239702). 6.00 London Tonight (Followed by Weather) (870). \* 6.30 **Emmerdale**. Frank Tate is pushed too far (S) (1412). \* 7.30 **Taxi**. Second of these tacky programmes in which a camera is concealed in the back of a London cab. Welcome to the future of TV (306). \* 8.00 **The Bill**. Drug overdose grief (7832). \* 8.30 **Cuts**. Adapted by David Nobbs from Malcolm Bradbury's comic novel, this is satire - of media folk - of the cosiest order, and the sort of obvious casting that makes you wonder why anyone bothers with casting directors. Peter Davison is a mild-mannered lecturer-cum-obscure novelist who's asked to pen an epic drama serial by the power-crazed boss of an independent TV company (Timothy West) (S) (12870). \* 10.15 **The Bob Downe Special** The Australian comedian plus guests Ant and Dec, Anthony Newley and EastEnders Martine McCutcheon (853734). \* 11.15 **The Golden Child** (Michael Ritchie 1986 US). The sort of trip that seems Eddie Murphy's career earthworks. He plays a Los Angeles social worker who is reluctantly employed by wizened oriental sages to locate a mystical youth with the power to bring peace to mankind (S) (550986). \* 11.55 **New Year Bells**. Trevor McDonald joins Hogmanay revellers at Scotland's Scone Palace (925986). 12.05 **The Golden Child** (S) (938557). \* 1.10 **Topaz** (Alfred Hitchcock 1969 US). Hitch's 51st feature is a duller-than-dull spy yarn about Cuban rightists, French government agents and so forth. He'd clearly lost his touch at this stage. John Forsythe leads the cast (3328002). 1.30 **The Swiss Conspiracy** (Jack Arnold 1975 US). Derivative thriller starring David Janssen as a bank security expert (27333). To 5.00am.

## Channel 4

6.20 Early Morning: **Sesame Street** (3557764). 7.15 **The Babysitters Club** (R) (9888324). 8.50 **Stunt Dawgs** (5302290). 8.15 **Little Shop** (R) (7422783). 8.35 **Where on Earth is Carmen San Diego?** (R) (6445693). 9.00 **The Big Breakfast** (37832). 10.00 **Hangin' with Mr Cooper** (R) (S) (21696). \* 10.30 **The Crystal Maze** (R) (S) (43412). \* 11.30 **Back to the Future** (R) (S) (9058257). 11.55 **The Pink Panther** (R) (2167487). 12.20 **Scoti Search**. New series of debates investigating moral issues from a Jewish, Muslim and Hindu perspective (S) (3447033). \* 12.50 **Babylon 5** (R) (S) (347306). 1.40 **As It Happens**. Dr Phil Hammond and Tony Gardner begin a day on the spot reports from Birmingham City Hospital (7229870). 2.20 **Les Girls** (George Cukor 1957 US). Tragic Kay Kendall is the best thing about this good-looking but noisy musical - and we don't get enough of her. Everybody else seems to be having an off time of it, from Gene Kelly and Mitzi Gaynor in the leading roles to Cole Porter's weak score. The story concerns an ex-showgirl who publishes her steamy memoirs and finds herself issued with a lawsuit by two former colleagues (88122257). \* 4.30 **Countdown** (S) (219). \* 5.00 **Technological Thrash** (646412). 5.10 **Tom Thumb** (George Pal 1958 US). The first of four films featuring Peter Sellers tonight is MGM's fine musical version of the story, with Russ Tamblyn in the title role (55312412). \* 6.50 **News and Weather** (57135783). 6.55 **Two Way Stretch** (Robert Day 1960 UK). Lovely old British comedy in which convicts Peter Sellers, Bernard Cribbins and David Lodge break out of jail to rob a maharajah then sneak back in to give themselves the perfect alibi (54716122). \* 8.30 **Brookside**. Jackie realises that forgetting Jimmy is easier said than done (S) (4509). \* 9.00 **As It Happens**. Another report from Birmingham City Hospital (616777). 9.15 **A Shot in the Dark** (Blake Edwards 1964 UK). Sequel to **The Pink Panther**. Peter Sellers returns as the bumbling Inspector Clouseau, out to prove a French maid (Eile Sommers) innocent of her husband's murder (8476156). \* 11.10 **The Adam and Eve Show** (G15156). 11.45 **As It Happens**. Back to Birmingham City Hospital, where no doubt things are hotting up (S12702). 12.40 **St Elsewhere**. Vintage episode of the American medical drama (R) (S) (9148975). 1.40 **As It Happens** (453293). 2.45 **The Optimism of Nine Years** (Anthony Simons 1973 US). Rarely seen Peter Sellers cutting in which plays a down-and-out busker adopted by a group of London slum children. This was originally a vehicle for Danny Kaye, which gives you an idea about the tone (526517). To 4.45am.

## ITV/Regions

ANGLIA As London except: 12.55pm Cross Wits (G108677). 5.10 **Shortland Street** (12761411). 5.10 **Wheel of Fortune** (7787509). 6.00 **Home and Away Special** (S11577). 1.10am **Film** Independence (503954). 3.00am **Football Extra** (6490523). 4.35-5.55am **Film** The Pickwick Papers (4534352). CHANNEL 3 NORTH EAST/ORKNEY As London except: 12.55pm Coronation Street (9108677). 5.10 **Wheel of Fortune** (7787509). 6.10am **Instant Replay** 1996 (4389772). 2.10am **Not Half Away** (5525594). 3.05am **Film** Sentence (7572460). 4.35-5.55am **Film** The Pickwick Papers (4534352). CENTRAL As London except: 12.55pm **A Country Practice** (9108677). 4.40pm **onga's Tale: The Making of *Braveheart*** (12761411). 5.10 **Wheel of Fortune** (7787509). 6.00 **Home and Away Special** (S151677). HERTFORDSHIRE As London except: 12.55pm West: **Dinosaurs** (8086777). Wales: **Peter Pan** (G108677). 3.25 **HTV News** (1613251). 4.40pm **onga's Tale: The Making of *Braveheart*** (12761411). 5.10 **Wheel of Fortune** (7787509). 6.00 **Home and Away Special** (S151677). MERIDIAN As London except: 12.55pm Shortland Street (G108677). 5.10 **Wheel of Fortune** (7787509). 6.30 **Celebrity Squares** (1222). 1.10am **Film** Independence (503954). 3.00am **Football Extra** (6490523). 4.30am **Instant Replay** 1996 (6490523). 4.35-5.55am **Film** The Pickwick Papers (4534352). WEST COUNTRY As London except: 12.20pm **My Story/Illuminations** (2876667). 12.55 **Wish You Were Here?** (9108677). 5.10 **Wheel of Fortune** (7787509). 6.10am **Film** Independence (503954). 3.00am **Football Extra** (6490523). 4.30am **Instant Replay** 1996 (6490523). 4.35-5.55am **Film** The Pickwick Papers (4534352). SIC 10.00pm **Film** Dr Dolittle (7082306). 12.35 **The Pink Panther** (S1020899). 1.00 **Slot Meirhau** (G12702). 1.30 **Film** The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (2633657). 2.50 **Film Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure** (4675434). 4.30pm **Film** Puma (61561). 5.30 **Countdown** (859). 6.00 **News** (4805059). 6.05 **Hand** (52783). 6.35 **Slot Meirhau** (G12702). 7.25 **Teenage Idol** (Barry Adams) (G320151). 7.30 **Top of the Pops** (1995). 8.30 **Wish You Were Here?** (9108677). 9.30 **Brookside**. Jackie realises that forgetting Jimmy is easier said than done (S) (4509). \* 9.00 **As It Happens**. Another report from Birmingham City Hospital (616777). 9.15 **A Shot in the Dark** (Blake Edwards 1964 UK). Sequel to **The Pink Panther**. Peter Sellers returns as the bumbling Inspector Clouseau, out to prove a French maid (Eile Sommers) innocent of her husband's murder (8476156). \* 11.10 **The Adam and Eve Show** (G15156). 11.45 **As It Happens**. Back to Birmingham City Hospital, where no doubt things are hotting up (S12702). 12.40 **St Elsewhere**. Vintage episode of the American medical drama (R) (S) (9148975). 1.40 **As It Happens** (453293). 2.45 **The Optimism of Nine Years** (Anthony Simons 1973 US). Rarely seen Peter Sellers cutting in which plays a down-and-out busker adopted by a group of London slum children. This was originally a vehicle for Danny Kaye, which gives you an idea about the tone (526517). To 4.45am.

## Radio

**Radio 1**  
97.35 **Star Gazing** (97.35)  
8.00am **Kevin Greening** 12.00  
Robbie Williams 2.00 **The Best of Collins and Macmillan's Hit Parade** 1996 3.00 **UK Top 40** of 1996 7.00 **Two Tongues All The Time** National Anthems 12.30 **Radio 1 Roadshow** 12.30-6.00am **Essential Mix** Live in Liverpool  
**Radio 2**  
6.00am **Barry Humphries** 7.30  
Sarah Kennedy 9.30 **Alex Lester** 11.30 **Young 1** 1.00 **Christmas Comedy Classics** 1.30 **The Beatles** at the BBC 2.30 **Ed Stewart** 5.05 **John Dunn** 7.00 **Hayes over Britain** Review of the Year 8.00 **Dr Who** 9.00 **David Attenborough's Comic 10.00**  
Champagne and Roséries 10.30 **Morecambe and Wise** 11.30 **Death in the Dark** 12.30 **Death in the Dark** 1.00 **Death in the Dark** 2.00 **Death in the Dark** 3.00 **Death in the Dark** 4.00 **Death in the Dark** 5.00 **Death in the Dark** 6.00 **Death in the Dark** 7.00 **Death in the Dark** 8.00 **Death in the Dark** 9.00 **Death in the Dark** 10.00 **Death in the Dark** 11.00 **Death in the Dark** 12.00 **Death in the Dark** 1.00 **Death in the Dark** 2.00 **Death in the Dark** 3.00 **Death in the Dark** 4.00 **Death in the Dark** 5.00 **Death in the Dark** 6.00 **Death in the Dark** 7.00 **Death in the Dark** 8.00 **Death in the Dark** 9.00 **Death in the Dark** 10.00 **Death in the Dark** 11.00 **Death in the Dark** 12.00 **Death in the Dark** 1.00 **Death in the Dark** 2.00 **Death in the Dark** 3.00 **Death in the Dark** 4.00 **Death in the Dark** 5.00 **Death in the Dark** 6.00 **Death in the Dark** 7.00 **Death in the Dark** 8.00 **Death in the Dark** 9.00 **Death in the Dark** 10.00 **Death in the Dark** 11.00 **Death in the Dark** 12.00 **Death in the Dark** 1.00 **Death in the Dark** 2.00 **Death in the Dark** 3.00 **Death in the Dark** 4.00 **Death in the Dark** 5.00 **Death in the Dark** 6.00 **Death in the Dark** 7.00 **Death in the Dark** 8.00 **Death in the Dark** 9.00 **Death in the Dark** 10.00 **Death in the Dark** 11.00 <

**At the double**  
Greg Wood sees the darts  
revival gather pace, page 21

# SPORT

**Rugby's powder keg**  
Chris Hewitt on union's  
survival test, page 22

# Campbell attacks English attitudes

## Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE  
reports from Harare

The weather may have settled it but it was the Zimbabwe captain, Alistair Campbell, who defiantly had the last say as this series finally spluttered to a draw after the last day's play was abandoned at lunch without a ball being bowled. Responding to claims by his opposite number, that England would have run out winners had both games been uninterrupted by rain, Campbell felt his opponents were "clutching at thin air".

"It's been one of the easier series for us," he said afterwards. "I really don't think there's that much between ourselves, New Zealand and England." A point he emphasised when he named the England players - Stewart (to bat only), Knight, Gough, Croft and Crowley - he felt might on current form get a game for Zimbabwe. A side, who as their captain pointed out, are probably only currently bottom-rated because of their constant visits to the subcontinent, a place where few travel well.

For England, it was the faintest hint of praise and Campbell was clearly miffed when he delivered his verdict. What has clearly irked the home side most however - judging by the amount of times Campbell repeated the phrase - were the claims made by David "We flippin' murder 'em" Lloyd, in the aftermath of the drawn Bulawayo Test.

"To keep saying they outplayed us is an astounding claim," Campbell panted. "Why can't they shrug off their superiority complex and just accept that we've matched them. It's monotonous to hear them keep saying that they've murdered us and a little bit of credit wouldn't go astray." He has a point and England have been notoriously given up by opposing cricket teams.

However, as is nearly always the case, the truth is out there lying somewhere between the polar opposites of propaganda now clumped out as a matter of course by most cricket teams.

That said, it has been England who have had the better chances of winning this series, though it was more by opportunism than consistently superior cricket, the likes of which Australia would have played had they been here instead of reviving old enemies in Melbourne.

Unlike the Australians, whose superiority complex is deep-seated and unashamedly unquestioned, ours comes in spurts, usually at home where familiarity seems to breed contentment rather than the apathy that appears to set in abroad - an affliction that weakens resolve and one that is often caused by the numbing routine endemic to most long tours.

Interestingly, one player described his experience of the current tour, as being like that of the television reporter in *Groundhog Day*. This is a film where one man's dull day in a hick American town, is replayed over and over, until he is able to avoid all the pitfalls

that befall him on that original first day.

Unfortunately, that has not quite been the experience of the majority of England's players here, who unlike the Dan Ackroyd character in the film, have struggled to come to terms with the repetitive slowness of the pitches and the wearying monotony of rain-drenched cricket grounds.

It is a point amplified by England's pathetic batting in the first innings of the last Test at

Harare Sports Club. A performance that was simply unprofessional, given that it was their fourth encounter on that turbulent surface.

England's main problem is that they are erratic, too often basing half-baked strategies upon shoddy foundations. Atherton, like his predecessor Gooch, tends to lead by inspiration and perspiration, rather than force of personality. A method that is over-dependent upon the immediate form of the captain, which as we know - apart from the West Indies series of 1991 - is about the direst of Atherton's career.

When England have failed in the past, it was invariably because Atherton, a monolith of defiance, had failed too. Now that he cannot even get started (he scored 34 runs in four test innings) his team are listing in seas where even the minnows like Zimbabwe have sharp teeth.

It would be unfair to dwell

solely on the negatives of a Test series that was over before it really got going. By the same token, neither can positives be given the usual kudos of approval without some misgivings about the strength of the opposition. Zimbabwe's bowling, with Paul Strang, is substantially better than their batting.

With that in mind, England can take heart from the maturing composure of John Crawley, who was the only batsman to remain unperturbed by the slug-

gh nature of the pitches: no mean feat when you play most of your county matches at Old Trafford, one of the true and ticklish surfaces in England.

Other assets emerged too, such as Robert Croft, a competitor as well as an off-spinner, likely to delight as many east, as west of the Severn bridge. His bristling combative qualities were shared by the likes of Darren Gough, Nick Knight and Nasser Hussain, as well as by old stagers like Alec Stewart.

David Lloyd (left), the England coach, talks to his assistant, John Emburey, prior to the umpires' decision to abandon play in Harare yesterday

Photograph: Clive Mason/Allsport

It is eight years since England last drew a series abroad and even that was in New Zealand, their next opponents, and the only overseas side England have beaten over a series, since Mike Gatting retained the Ashes 10 years ago. If that urn is to return next summer, England must first convince a growing legion of sceptics and win well in New Zealand.

SECOND TEST: Zimbabwe 156 (G. I. Wright 4-45, H. M. Strevens 4-43 and 125 for 3-4-1) Zimbabwe 102 (C. P. Thomas 50 not out) v Zimbabwe 215 (D. W. Flower 73, D. Gough 4-40). Zimbabwe drew with England.

# Clark accepts 'glorious' City challenge

## Football

GUY HODGSON

The 1996-97 season has yet to reach its six months and Manchester City have appointed their fifth manager. Frank Clark, who left Nottingham Forest because he said he felt like a turkey waiting for Christmas, accepted the job that has become football's equivalent of the roasting tray when he took over at Maine Road yesterday.

Clark signed a three-and-a-half year contract to replace Phil Neal, who had held the manager's position on a temporary basis since Steve Coppell resigned in November. Neal will leave City but a more shocking departure is that of first-team coach Tony Book, whose sacking ends a 30-year link with the club.

Clark, 53, took a training session yesterday morning and then

attended a "meet the new manager" press conference that has become a regular fixture. "This is a glorious opportunity," he said. "I know that's been said many times before but a club that gets 30,000 to a game when it's fourth from the bottom of the First Division and takes 6,000 fans to an away game at Barnsley has must potential. It doesn't sound like a job from hell to me."

Others might not agree. George Graham and Dave Bassett turned down the position and Coppell gave it up after 32 days, citing illness. In the last seven months City have been relegated from the Premiership, are in the First Division relegation zone and have won only two of their past 11 matches. Add £26m of debt, rumours of boardroom takeovers and the disruption of a new share issue, and the scale of Clark's task becomes apparent.

Eleven days after walking away from boardroom uncertainty at the City Ground, he was not deterred. "There's vast potential at the club," he said. "I know the supporters are fed up of hearing the word 'potential', but it is a club where, if you get it right, the sky is almost the limit."

There'll be money to spend, and that's obviously a big help. I will be assessing the playing staff as quickly as possible. There's some very good players at Manchester City, players who have had a difficult time over the last nine months or so. Every

player will be given a chance to show they can play a part here,"

That money will come with the share issue which will raise £10.8m next month. Neal had asked to spend some of it but, when it became apparent, he would not get the authorisation, his call for backing, paradoxically, moved the board in the opposite direction. Saturday's defeat at Barnsley hastened the process and the chairman, Francis Lee, had his holiday in the Caribbean interrupted to inform Clark's appointment.

Being Manchester City, how-

ever, the transfer of power could not go entirely smoothly and Clark had to spend an embarrassing half-hour in his car outside the club's Platt Lane training ground yesterday morning while Neal cleared his desk.

Not that the departing man appeared to hold a grudge. "I had been in bed all day with flu since Saturday, when I got the call yesterday afternoon to meet the representatives of the board," Neal said. "When I realised Frank was bringing his own management team, there was only one way forward."

The SOS I had been sending out and my frankness may have played a part in getting some positive action on the management front from the long-term good of Manchester City. Maybe my words did not go down well in all quarters but that's the way I am. You get what you see. I wish Frank all the best and I'm just

sorry it has not been possible for him to find a place for me."

There will be sadness among supporters, too, that no place is found on Clark's staff for Book, who was still referred to throughout the club as "Skip" in deference to his captaining the team to the championship in 1968, the FA Cup in 1969 and the European Cup-Winners' Cup in 1970.

The 62-year-old also managed the club for five years in the 1970s and was in charge when they won their last major honour, the 1976 League Cup. He also guided City to the runners-up spot behind Liverpool in the old First Division in 1976-77 yet was demoted to allow the return of Malcolm Allison in 1979.

If Clark achieves anything close to those achievements, he will be lauded as a genius. Book's sacking was a shabby

way to herald a new era.



Frank Clark at Maine Road yesterday. Photograph: Empics

## Everton move ends Phelan's misery

ALAN NIXON  
AND RUPERT METCALF

Terry Phelan's unhappy spell at Chelsea is over. The 29-year-old Republic of Ireland left-back is joining Everton for £850,000 as a replacement for Andy Hinchcliffe, who is out for the season with a knee injury.

Phelan drove north last night to agree a three and a half-year contract. He has been unsettled since Ruud Gullit took over at Stamford Bridge, and could make his debut tomorrow against Blackburn - who are ready to let the versatile Paul Warhurst join Bolton Wanderers on loan.

Frank Clark's arrival at Manchester City means that Nigel Clough is likely to make his return to Nottingham Forest permanent - with the Northern Ireland goalkeeper, Tommy Wright a candidate for a move in the opposite direction, possibly in exchange for Clough.

Reports from Belgrade yesterday suggested that Dejan Savicevic, Milan's Yugoslav international playmaker, may become a Manchester United player next year. The 30-year-old, who has won the European Cup with Red Star Belgrade and Milan, said that his "time with Milan is running out. All combinations are possible, but the

most probable is that I'll join Manchester United next autumn."

He also said that Monaco had made an offer. According to sources at Old Trafford, however, United have made no approach for the player.

Of greater concern to United is their defensive cover: Phil Neville has been ruled out for a month with glandular fever while Gary Pallister has aggravated a back injury and will be absent for at least a week.

United's former midfielder Paul Ince is in trouble again in Italy. He has been suspended for four Serie A games following his third red card of the season - against Reggiana on 22 December. Another Old Trafford boy, the Middlesbrough player-manager Bryan Robson, may have to play at Arenal tomorrow because of his side's injury crisis. Robson, 40 next month, has not played for a year.

Jim Duffy has resigned as manager of Dundee to take charge of Hibernian. He replaces Jocky Scott, who had been in charge at Easter Road since Alex Miller's resignation in September. Dundee's new manager is Duffy's former assistant, John McCormick.

The Arsenal forward Chris Kiwomya has joined the French club Le Havre on loan for six months. The 27-year-old cost £1.25m from Ipswich last year.

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CHILDREN WELCOME  
Sharing a room with 2 adults. Under 5: Stay & eat breakfast free  
6-11: Stay free, £5 each per breakfast

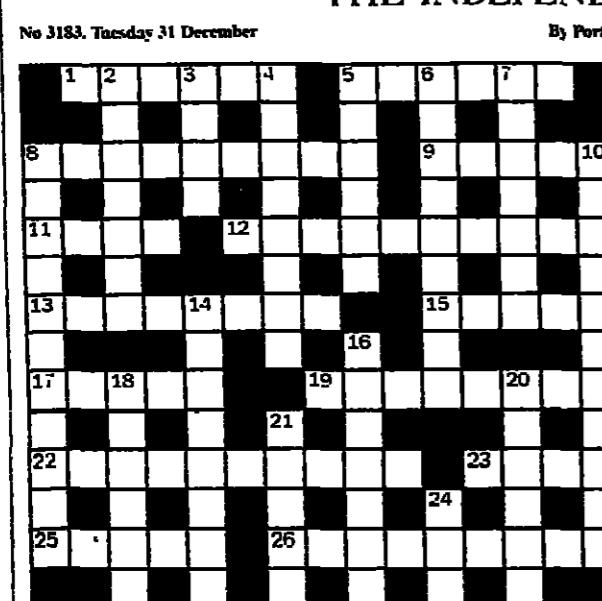
Ask your Travel Agent to book through Highlife on 0800 700 400  
(N. Ireland 01232 312000) or call the hotel of your choice

Price quote reference DA IN3112

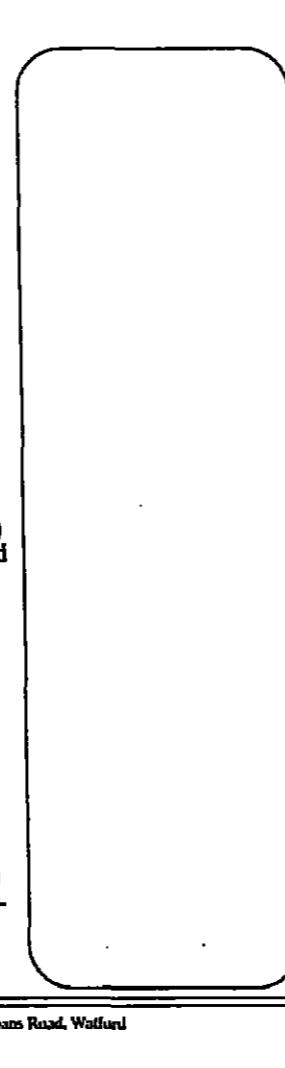
Price per person per night based on 2 people sharing a double or twin room. No single occupancy  
Booking subject to limited availability. All details correct at time of going to press.

## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

By Portia



ACROSS  
1 Prepare to be reconciled (4)  
5 Soldiers right about number's being cut down (6)  
8 It clearly protects food (5)  
9 Way to accommodate family without money (5)  
11 It fits round the middle window (4)  
12 Roly lot of players? (6)  
13 About to imbibe one drink of wine (8)  
15 Accepted duty towards tropical island (5)  
17 Turn pale being without means of transport (5)  
19 Minor incident that attracts a fair crowd? (8)  
22 Soundly rejected in every respect (10)  
23 Sailor's back, operating out of Scottish port (4)  
25 Firm has nothing in stock (5)  
26 Unable to get off? (9)  
27 Light energy is occupying old philosopher (6)  
28 Initially, try to calm trapped river bird (6)  
29 Present number under discussion (2,5)  
30 Therefore is found in the later gospels (4)  
31 Pure soft metal brought in advance (8)  
32 Continue to keep academic in check (6)  
33 Possibly get ideas about new name (9)  
34 Smart move ringing American in the USA (7)  
35 Somehow crash twice and be out of European race (11)  
36 Flipping childish games? (11)  
37 Goad uncle about old French dialect (6,3)  
38 Number in control of conservation body prove hostile (8)  
39 Refuse to leave key in lock-up (7)  
40 Language society produces Christian book (7)  
41 Preferred to order different ones (6)  
42 Short of extra box (4)



DOWN  
14 Number in control of conservation body prove hostile (8)  
15 Minor incident that attracts a fair crowd? (8)  
16 Number in control of conservation body prove hostile (8)  
17 Turn pale being without means of transport (5)  
18 Refuse to leave key in lock-up (7)  
19 Minor incident that attracts a fair crowd? (8)  
20 Language society produces Christian book (7)  
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22 Soundly rejected in every respect (10)  
23 Sailor's back, operating out of Scottish port (4)  
24 Short of extra box (4)

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